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LIFE AMONG
THE
CHOCTAW INDIANS,
AND
SKETCHES OF THE SOUTH-WEST.

BY

HENRY C. BENSON, A. M.,
OF THE CALIFORNIA CONFERENCE.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY REV. T. A. MORRIS, D. D.,
SENIOR BISHOP OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

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TO THE READER.

INTERVALS of leisure are ordinarily rare and brief in the life of an itinerant minister in a new country; he seldom has an hour to devote to miscellaneous reading or literary effort, apart from his appropriate work. At the session of the California conference, held in Sacramento City, September, 1858, the writer was appointed to an extensive and laborious field of labor in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, where it was not probable that he could have any time to devote to *book-making*. But during the prevalence of a winter storm of several days' continuance and unusual violence, he found himself effectually housed. His meager library was fully read up, and he was at a loss to know how profitably to spend the stormy days and long evenings.

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In searching among old papers and manuscripts, the *notes* and *sketches* which had been written in the south-west were overhauled. The scenes and events of the past were called up, and he *lived over* the years of his early ministry in the Indian country. The notes were very brief, but memory was astonishingly faithful in filling up every chasm of the meager outline. During the continuance of that and subsequent storms the following pages were hastily written.

If this little volume shall serve to contribute information, or rescue from oblivion items of interest for the future historian of the Church, or in any degree awaken new interest and zeal in behalf of Indian missions, the writer will feel himself amply compensated for the labor thus expended.

The Indian tribes of the south-west are the largest and most hopeful on the continent; and yet not a single volume has been written, setting forth their history, their state of advancement in religion and the arts of civilized life, or of their future prospects.

Whatever may be the judgment pronounced

upon this unpretending volume, the writer has the consolation of knowing that his purpose has been to write the truth, and to record such facts as, with God's blessing, might edify and instruct the reader.

H. C. B.

PLACERVILLE, CALIFORNIA,
SEPTEMBER 3, 1859.

INTRODUCTION.

OUR American Indians are objects of interest to the philanthropist and of sympathy to the Christian. If left in their heathen state, nothing can rescue them from utter extinction. Their once powerful tribes, noted for deeds of valor, are reduced to broken fragments, "scattered and peeled." Their cemeteries where their fathers sleep are, in some instances, the sites of flourishing villages. The plains where once they pursued the buffalo are cultivated fields. The valleys where they securely kindled their camp-fires, around which to narrate the incidents of the chase and enjoy the merry laugh, are thoroughfares of travel, operated by noisy locomotives, conveying millions of passengers on excursions of business or pleasure. Already the aboriginals of this western world have receded before the aggressions of the white race from the Atlantic Ocean to the west boundary of the United States. A similar movement has commenced on the Pacific coast, driving them eastward. Comparatively little territory remains to them free from the intrusion of white men. It requires no prophetic vision to foresee, that at no very distant period the last Indian council will adjourn in hopeless despair, perhaps in some dark ravine of the Rocky Mountains; each member retiring in silence to some sequestered cavern to sleep his long sleep, saying to himself, "Our council-fire is forever extinguished, and our name is blotted out of the record of nations!"

Now, it may be that this rapid disappearance before a superior race is in the order of an overruling Providence. It is declared in the book from which there is no appeal, "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted." Isaiah lx, 12. Heathenism and Christian civilization can never flourish as cotemporaries on the same soil. The life of one is the death of the other. There is, however, a marked difference between the destruction of paganism and that of its subjects. Christ came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And whatever can be done to save the Indians from their delusion and wretchedness, should be accomplished. We owe them this kind office for depriving them of their country. If it be objected, "They have been guilty of much cruelty," the answer is, They have had great provocation. The course of our Government toward them has usually been parental. This is as it should be. It is magnanimous in the strong to favor the weak. The same can not be said of traders and hangers-on. They follow the paymasters with their "fire-waters," to cheat the Indians out of their annuities, to intoxicate their young men, seduce their young women, inflame the national prejudices of their warriors, and scatter firebrands, arrows, and death. In this way the benevolent purposes of the Government have, to a great extent, been defeated.

The only hope of the Indians, in my opinion, is in their conversion to Christ, not nominally by bribery and beads, but savingly by the simple Gospel, attended by the power of the Holy Spirit. Our Indian missions, though not as successful as we could desire, have not all proved failures. Thousands of savages have been soundly converted; that is, changed in heart and life, and made "new creatures in Christ." All such abandon the uncertain chase, and adopt the more reliable business of tilling the soil. This is the last resort promising success against the process of extinction. Some of the border tribes, embracing Christianity and agricultural pursuits, have experienced a favorable reaction, followed by an increase of population. These facts are illustrated in the pages of this new work, "Life Among the Choctaw Indians."

I am well acquainted with Rev. Henry C. Benson, the author of this book. He is a competent scholar and a consistent minister of the Gospel. Whatever he narrates from personal knowledge is reliable. Moreover, he has been a practical missionary, with favorable opportunities of information, and furnishes facts and incidents more valuable than mere theory. His observations are confined chiefly to the tribes on our western border, of whom I had some personal knowledge previously. I learned much of the Creek Indians during their transit to their new home west in 1836, and something of the Choctaws the same year. I visited the Cherokees at their old home in Georgia in 1837, and subsequently at their present home west of Arkansas. I have also visited the Delaware, Wyandott, Shawnee, Pottawattomie, Quapaw, and Seneca nations; so that many references in this volume to persons and localities were to me like meeting with old friends. I heartily commend it to the favorable consideration of the reader.

T. A. MORRIS.

CINCINNATI, JANUARY, 1860.

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LIFE AMONG THE CHOCTAWS.

LIFE AMONG
THE
CHOCTAW INDIANS.

CHAPTER I.

BORDER INDIANS.

THE policy of the United States Government, for many years, has been to colonize the Indian tribes in a separate territory upon the western frontier. By consulting the maps published fifteen or twenty years since, a region of country, west of the states, will be seen, with its metes and bounds distinctly defined, designated, the INDIAN TERRITORY. It was bounded on the east by Arkansas and Missouri; on the north by Platte river; on the south by Red river, and on the west by the wild tribes, known as the "Prairie Indians."

Within the Indian territory, not including the wild tribes, there were over twenty distinct races, of which the following were most important: the Wyandotts, Shawnees, Delawares, Kickapoos, Pottawattomies, Osages, Cherokees, Creeks—or Muscogees—Seminoles, Choctaws, and Chickasaws. Of these the Osages alone are indigenous; all the other tribes named formerly resided on reserved lands, within the states east of the Mississippi river. The tribes that may be regarded as indigenous, being found within the territory, are the Omahas, Pawnees, Otoes, Kaws, and Quapaws. There are a few other remnants perhaps. The small tribes were removed from the northern states; they are feeble, and many of them well-nigh extinct. The Wyandotts are the most hopeful.

The largest and most promising races were removed from the southern states; the Cherokees from Georgia; the Choctaws and Creeks from Mississippi, and the Seminoles from Florida. The Chickasaws were also from Mississippi, and are now incorporated with the Choctaws, speaking the same language; and in all respects resembling them, they are evidently a branch of the same family. The tribes have been removed to their present homes at different periods within the past twenty-five years. The General Government has been greatly censured for its treatment of the Indians; and, in some instances, without doubt, the censure has been merited. And yet the reasons for that policy have been numerous and weighty; reasons which looked to the interests of the Indians no less than those of the whites. To the small tribes a removal was not merely desirable, but absolutely necessary; for it was not possible that a handful of people, uneducated, and occupying but a few square miles, could maintain a distinct nationality and independence in the heart of a great and growing state.

So situated they could not long survive the ravages of corrupt and vicious white men, who would not cease to prowl around to rob them of character and of property. On the other hand, it could scarcely be expected that the whites would consent to have in their midst an inhomogeneous community, incapable of assimilation or citizenship. As the elements of equality did not exist, the necessity seemed to be absolute for subordination, extinction, or removal; and the last was surely the most humane and merciful. We may deeply regret, yet we may not wholly ignore the existence of such necessity. The designs of the Government, in removing the Indians to the western border, we believe to have been wise and benevolent, having in view the best interests of these unfortunate people. That agents and employes have, in some instances, utterly failed to carry out the intentions of the Government, we are fully aware. Honest and equitable treaties have generally been made, securing to the Indians equally fertile and much more extensive lands and homes, where the surrounding influences would be less pernicious, and the circumstances altogether more favorable to their improvement and permanent prosperity. In addition to their new homes, they receive annuities which, if wisely expended, may greatly aid in the education and advancement of their children and youth, in the arts and habits of civilization.

So far as we are informed, but two of the tribes have been fraudulently dispossessed and forcibly driven from their lands and their former homes. And those acts of perfidy toward feeble tribes, who were powerless to defend and maintain their rights, can not fail to receive the merited condemnation of upright and virtuous men in all coming time. It will remain forever a dark page in our history. It shows a destitution of that magnanimity which should ever characterize the strong in their dealings with the weak and the helpless. By the system of colonizing the Indians the various tribes are located contiguous to each other, so as mutually to stimulate and encourage one another in their efforts to improve themselves, and to promote those interests which are common to all the tribes.

Thus situated they will develop the better traits of character, will be more ambitious and energetic in their efforts to become intelligent and respectable, than if they had continued to occupy their reservations, in the several states from which they have been removed.

Previous to their emigration to the territory they were declining in numbers, and desponding with regard to their future. But their doom seems to have been averted, and many of the larger tribes have increased in numbers, in wealth, and in intelligence. This statement applies especially to the Cherokees and Choctaws, who are, in all respects, the most promising and hopeful Indians of the border. In 1845 the Cherokees and the Creeks, or Muscogees, numbered each about twenty-five thousand souls; the

Choctaws and Chickasaws, united, about sixteen thousand; but there were about eight thousand Choctaws, at that period, in the old nations in Mississippi, who have been removed west since that time. The Cherokee territory lies on the north side of the Arkansas river, bounded by the state on the east, and extending north as far as to the south-west corner of Missouri. The Choctaw nation, including the Chickasaws, occupies the entire country between the Arkansas and Red rivers. The Creeks and Seminoles are settled west of the northern district of the Choctaws, between the Canadian river and the middle fork of the Arkansas. The tribes named are by far the most numerous, intelligent, and promising of the Indians of the border. The Cherokees, Choctaws, and Creeks embrace more than seventy-five per cent. of the entire number of the Indians who have been removed west by the United States Government. They are more than seventy per cent. of the Indians on the border between the head waters of the Mississippi and the Gulf of Mexico.

The Chickasaws were incorporated among the Choctaw nation, having a district set apart for themselves. They were located on the Red river, west and south of Washita. They claimed to be cousins of the Choctaws, and spoke the same language, with a slight variation in accent. According to the tradition there were two brothers who were heads of families, living upon the same lands; but as they became numerous they finally agreed to separate, and like Abraham and Lot each selected his lands and hunting grounds. The Chickasaws were feeble as to numbers, but richer in annuities than their neighbors. Fort Washita was in their territory, and at that time under the command of Colonel Harney, who was kind and courteous to the missionaries that were appointed to labor with that people.

CHAPTER II.

GOVERNMENT.

A NUMBER of the larger tribes had adopted republican forms of government, modeled after ours in their leading features. On the first day of July, 1839, the wise men of the Cherokee nation assembled in convention, or council, to frame an organic law, or constitution, for the government of the nation. After patient and mature deliberation, they adopted a constitution essentially republican, which has now been in force for a score of years. Their government consists of the executive, legislative, and judicial departments. The executive power is lodged in a chief, an assistant-chief, and a council of five, all of whom are chosen by the people for a term of four years. The chief, under certain restrictions, may exercise a veto power. The legislature consists of a senate, composed of at least sixteen members, and an assembly of not less than twenty-four members, all to be chosen by ballot, from districts the boundaries of which are defined by law. The sessions of the legislature open annually on the first Monday of October, when each house is organized by the election of presiding officers, the necessary number of clerks and under officers. Bills are introduced and passed through both branches in parliamentary form.

The judiciary consists of the supreme and circuit courts, and the ordinary justices of the peace. The common law of England is recognized as in the States, and the right of trial by jury is secured to every citizen.

Religious toleration is established, but no man is competent to testify as a witness in a court, or to hold a civil office, who denies the existence of God or a future state of rewards and punishments.

After the adoption of the constitution the several officers were elected by the people, and the new government went into immediate and successful operation. It is proper to state, however, that a government embracing the leading features of the present, but less perfect in its details, had been adopted by the Cherokees in the old nation east of the Mississippi.

The Choctaws soon adopted a constitution quite similar to that of the Cherokees, except that the executive power was vested in a council of chiefs, one being chosen by each district. The chiefs were equal in power, and, during the sessions of the legislature, they jointly performed the duties devolving upon the executive, and, under proper restrictions, they exercised the veto power. The Choctaw capital, or grand council, was located on the Kiemichi river, above Fort Towson, south and west of the geographical center of their territory. Each district had, also, a council ground, at which elections and courts were held and other local business was transacted.

The sheriffs or marshals were styled "light-horsemen," and to them were committed numerous and responsible duties. They are the acting police, whose duty it is to execute the laws, arrest offenders, and execute the decrees of the courts. The chiefs serve for a term of four years; all are elected by the people *viva voce*.

The constitution and laws of the Choctaws are printed in both the English and native languages. In 1845 they were all contained in a single duodecimo volume of less than three hundred pages. The government is by no means complete and perfect, yet it is quite efficient in its operations. The laws are executed with a good degree of promptness. The punishments, at the time of which we write, consisted of fines, whipping, and death; and, as there were no prisons in which to confine culprits, it was a matter of honor with accused persons to appear in court and answer to charges. If a man were charged with crime, and failed to come to court, he was stigmatized as a coward. To the high-minded Indian cowardice is worse than death. It is affirmed that a full-blooded Choctaw was never known to abscond or secrete himself to evade the sentence of the law. Even when the sentence is death he will not flee, but will stand forth and present his breast to receive the fatal balls from the rifles of the light-horsemen.

A circumstance was related to us which will serve to illustrate this trait of character. Two brothers were living together, one of whom had been charged with crime, convicted, and sentenced to be executed. When the morning came on which the sentence should be carried into effect, the condemned man manifested some reluctance in meeting the light-horsemen. The brother was both surprised and indignant. "My brother," said he, "you 'fraid to die; you no good Indian; you coward; you no plenty much brave. You live, take care my woman and child; I die; I no 'fraid die; much brave!" The exchange was accordingly made; the innocent brother died while the guilty was permitted to live. This was said to have occurred before they emigrated west. In an earlier period of their history substitutes were frequently accepted, and when the guilty was not found any member of his family was liable to be arrested and made to suffer the penalty which should have been inflicted upon the criminal. The law required "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," blood for blood; but they would not execute two men for the murder of one. Two or more might be implicated, yet the death of one malefactor satisfied the demands of justice. Before the adoption of their present constitution, the injured or aggrieved party was permitted to take the case into his own hands, and to administer justice in the most summary manner; but since the organization of the new government every charge must take the form of a regular indictment, be carefully investigated, and decided in [illegible] legal form.

CHAPTER III.

SOCIAL HABITS.

THE border Indians, so far as we could learn, all lived in families, recognising the marriage relation, with its duties and obligations. Polygamy was tolerated in most, perhaps all the tribes, yet it did not exist to much extent. The Cherokees had enacted laws to prohibit it, but they had not been very rigorously enforced. The Choctaws tolerated the practice, yet under such restrictions as were well calculated to discourage and finally to suppress it. If a man should separate from, or abandon his wife, his property was liable to be seized by the light-horsemen and appropriated to the benefit of the divorced woman. I remember but one man in our district who had two wives, and they resided fifteen or twenty miles distant from each other, and each had one or two servants to serve as housekeeper. One of these wives united with the Church, after which she did not live with her man. She felt justified in her course, as she was the one last taken, and, hence, could not be his lawful wife.

Separations and desertions were of rare occurrence. So far as we could judge they were faithful to their vows, and lived happily together, in most instances, till separated by death. The husband and wife usually kept their property distinct; this was true so far as annuities and stock were concerned, but the wife, in cases of necessity, had a right to live upon the property of her husband; and this right still pertained to the abandoned or divorced wife as long as she remained in a single state.

There were no Indian towns or villages in the nation, and but little inclination manifested by the people for settling in clusters or dense communities. There were a few cabins, a dry-goods store, and a blacksmith shop in the vicinity of the Choctaw Agency, at which place there was also a post-office. The little cluster of log buildings was sometimes considered worthy to be styled a village, and it was named by the natives "Skullaville." "*Skulla*" signifies "*bit;*" that is, *one dime:* hence the literal name of the village was *Bitville*, and it was so called because the natives went to it to expend their small change. There were two or three other trading posts which were about equally entitled to the appellation of towns or villages, among which Doaksville was the most important.

The people were scattered over their entire territory, and engaged in agriculture and the raising of stock. The land all belonged to the commonwealth, no one being permitted to possess, in fee-simple, any real estate whatever. The unoccupied lands were alike free to all for occupancy, improvement, and private uses, without molestation or encroachment from others, and without taxation; but possession was only retained by occupancy or residence upon the land. If a man should vacate a house or farm, any one had a right to take possession and hold it henceforth without dispute. His title was considered just as valid as if he had been the original owner, and had made the improvements. It was proper, however, for one to sell his improvements, if he could find a purchaser before vacating the premises. None of the tribe lived in tents or wigwams, but in log-cabins, after the style of the white people on the frontiers. We occasionally saw a family occupying a good frame house, finished and furnished with reference to taste and comfort.

The wild game which had once abounded in that region was nearly consumed. None could depend on the chase for a subsistence, although many deer and smaller animals were slaughtered annually. Every man conceived it necessary to have a field in which to produce corn to make *tom-ful-la*, a peculiar preparation of hominy, which was a universal and favorite dish with the Choctaws; also vegetables, of which pumpkins, peas, melons, and yams were staples. Their fields varied in size, from one to ten acres; and when slaves were owned, to perform the labor, good farms were made and cultivated with considerable profit. It will be remembered that the tribes in the south-west were originally within the states of Mississippi, Georgia, and Florida: hence they are *southern*, and, in removing west, carried the "peculiar institution" with them. As far as they are able they are slaveholders, and even very poor Indians will manage to get possession of one or two negroes to perform their heavy work. Indians are known to cherish an invincible disgust for manual labor. But when the natives had not the good fortune to own "boys" and "girls" to serve them, the men did the outdoor work, especially in clearing the ground, fencing in the fields, and in plowing and planting. The women kept their houses in order, did the cooking and washing, and aided in hoeing in the gardens. I never discovered that the burdens were heaped upon the females, as we are assured is the custom in savage life and with the wild tribes who roam over the forests, depending upon the chase for their subsistence.

The intercourse among neighbors and acquaintances was characterized by kindness, good feeling, and thoughtful consideration. Serious misunderstandings, strifes, and contentions were seldom known to occur; and in every instance, bitter strife and violence could be traced to the use of intoxicating drinks.

It is scarcely necessary to record that the practice of *smoking tobacco* was universal. The *pipe* is an Indian institution, equally prized by all the tribes. I do not remember that I ever saw one who was not passionately fond of the pipe—men, women, and children, without exception. Even little lads and lasses, from six to ten years of age, could puff away and send forth clouds of smoke, in the most beautiful and approved fashion. The pipe was not regarded as a luxury, but as one of the necessaries of life; and when tobacco could not be obtained, they would use roots and bark as substitutes, smoking still with a relish, which did not admit a doubt of their love of the custom.

CHAPTER IV.

EDUCATION.

THE United States Government has not failed to encourage the establishment of schools in all the Indian tribes, with whom treaties have been entered into. Appropriations have been made, school funds created, and teachers employed under the direction of the Indian agents, but, in most cases, with comparatively little success. Parents have been too ignorant and stupid to appreciate the importance of education, and, consequently, have neglected to send their children regularly to the schools, when established and located in their immediate neighborhoods. The teachers, too, in many instances, have manifested much more eagerness to receive good salaries than to secure success in teaching the children. Universal indifference on the part of the Indians themselves, with regard to the education of the children, and a selfish eagerness on the part of teachers to receive their pay rather than a zeal and earnestness to accomplish good, rendered the benevolent designs and efforts of the Government abortive. And yet good was accomplished—a few in the vicinity of each school were taught the language, and also to read and to write.

The first important school of a high grade, founded for the exclusive benefit of the Indians and sustained by their own funds, was the Choctaw Academy. It was located in Kentucky, and established principally through the active agency of the Hon. Richard M. Johnson, who was a true friend of the Indians, manifesting, as long as he lived, a deep and lively interest in their welfare.

That seminary, though designed more especially for the Choctaws, was open for the reception of pupils from such other tribes as were willing to contribute their *pro rata* of the funds necessary for its support—only a few availed themselves of the privilege of the school. The Choctaw Academy did a vast amount of good; the best men we saw in the nation had there received their education. They were active, intelligent, and earnest men, who still live to bless their race by their efficient labors in the work of civilization. And yet the Choctaw Academy was considered a failure, even by its most zealous and steadfast friends and supporters. They became discouraged, finding that they were not crowned with the success which they had confidently anticipated.

The old Indians, after watching narrowly the influence of the school for years, complained that their sons came home disqualified for usefulness. They were neither Indians nor white men. They remained in Kentucky till they forgot their own people, their customs, and their traditions—in some instances even their native tongue. They came home strangers to their own parents and brethren, and wanting in attachment to their tribe and its national characteristics. Their sons, raised up in the school, without being taught to labor, were indolent and effeminate, and to a great extent disqualified for citizenship among their own people. These complaints were just in many instances, yet there were many exceptions; for it can not be questioned, that in that seminary much talent was developed, which was afterward employed in the elevation and improvement of the tribe. But after mature deliberation the funds were withdrawn, and the Academy was disbanded. All parties united in the opinion that the children and youth ought to be educated at home, and that seminaries of learning should be established in the nation, so that the adults might receive profit from the example and teachings of those who were employed to educate their sons and daughters. As habits of industry and a training at useful occupations were indispensable in a practical education, it was believed that manual-labor schools, in which the pupils should be clothed and boarded, were adapted to their condition.

I would not omit to mention that a few schools had been taught by the missionaries, who had been laboring for years in the nation. The missions were Methodist, Presbyterian, and Baptist; and in connection with each branch of the Church there were many communicants. The Gospel had been preached with success, and God's blessing upon his word had won many precious souls to the fold of the blessed Savior. There were many scores of men and women who were earnest, devoted, and consistent disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. The labors of the faithful missionaries had prepared them for the adoption of a general system of education—a system adapted to their necessities.

At the time the General Government purchased their lands in Mississippi a school fund was created, and provision was made for a number of schools, to be located at the most eligible points, and to be free to all who should be willing to patronize them. Immediately after their removal to their present homes the schools were opened at the sites chosen; a majority of them were located in the middle and southern districts. There was but one school taught in the Moshulatubbee district in 1843; it was in the vicinity of the Agency, and, though free for all, the average attendance of pupils did not exceed one dozen. The teacher was a competent and worthy man, who felt exceedingly anxious to do his duty and render himself useful. Schools had been opened at Pheasant Bluffs and at Ayaknirt-chukma, but, owing to the utter indifference of the parents, they had been discontinued. And, after a fair experiment, these, like other government schools, were pronounced a failure. The agent, and the few intelligent Indians, who had labored with so much anxiety and hope, finally became discouraged. Their efforts to infuse their own spirit, and to excite a general interest in favor of education and civilization were abortive. The children were growing up in gross ignorance; not one in a hundred was learning to read or becoming industrious and thrifty. The few who had been kept in the schools, and taught to read, were not materially improved; for their habits had not been changed. Home influences were of the most pernicious character, and parental example and precept served almost wholly to neutralize the lessons of virtue and morality which the teachers had labored to inculcate. It was also found exceedingly difficult to teach the pupils to speak the English language, while living at home, and conversing only in the native dialect.

There were a few schools taught in which Choctaw books alone were used; these were designed more especially for grown-up persons, who were not able to converse in English, and who were anxious to read the few books that had been translated and published in their own tongue. There were elementary school books, portions of the New Testament, and a small hymn-book, printed in the Choctaw. That was the extent of their literature at that time. Unlike most Indian languages, theirs is not guttural, and hence it is readily written with the Roman alphabet, and can be spoken as readily as our own. Thus the work of translating and preparing books for the use of the natives is rendered comparatively light.

When adults have been converted and received into the Church, they have been urged to study the alphabet and learn to read in their own language; and I do not remember one native Christian man who was not able to read the Choctaw Testament. When traveling from home the native disciple did not forget to have his "*achukma hollisso*"—good book—in his pocket as a traveling companion. We have seen the old, tawny, and weather-beaten soldier of the cross take his Testament from his pocket and pore over its pages with an intensity of interest which gave the strongest possible proof of the love of the truth which had found a lodgment in the heart.

I distinctly remember one man, about fifty years of age, who spent a Sunday at our mission. His name was Nawah; he had a son in the Fort Coffee Academy; and, as he was a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Mr. Goode asked him to pray and give a "talk" to the students. He walked deliberately to the desk, and, putting his hand into his bosom, he brought forth his Testament, and having read a chapter he kneeled down and prayed with much earnestness. After prayer he opened his Testament and gave the lads an exposition of the Scripture lesson; and though we were not able to understand his discourse, yet it was evident that he succeeded in making his lecture very interesting to the youths whom he addressed.

CHAPTER V.

THE COUNTRY.

The Choctaws were removed to their present homes in the year 1837, or about that period. The boundaries of their territory have been given already. Their country was one hundred and twenty miles in extent from north to south, and about fifty in width from east to west; the western boundary, however, was not definitely fixed. Their lands were amply sufficient for their wants present and prospective. The soil was not generally very fertile or productive, except the bottoms, which were not extensive, and liable to inundations so late in the summer as to injure and frequently destroy the growing crops of corn and cotton. The uplands were thin and gravelly, as to soil, and incapable of producing good crops. The timber in the bottoms consisted of cottonwood, elm, walnut, hickory, pecan, and *bois d'arc*, or osage orange. The timber of the uplands consisted principally of oak of every species and all of a stunted growth. There were dense canebrakes along the water-courses, some of which were of several miles extent, and growing so thickly that a bird would find it difficult to fly through them. The canes in the rich alluvial soil grew from twenty to thirty feet in hight, and a single reed was sometimes from four to five inches in circumference. The country was not very rich and inviting to the farmer who should make agriculture his only business, but it was well adapted to grazing purposes. The growth of grass upon the light, thin soil was not luxuriant, but the range was extensive; and when the grass on the dry lands was consumed the marshes afforded a heavy crop, and if *all* the grass should be consumed the new growth of cane was rich, and afforded an inexhaustible supply of food for horses and cattle during the entire winter. The winters in that climate are very mild and short, so that the stock may pass through the season without grain or fodder being laid up for them, and be kept in good condition. Cattle and horses running on the commons look well through the entire year.

The country and climate seem to be peculiarly adapted to the condition and necessities of the Indians, who were much more inclined to produce live stock than to procure a living by the cultivation of the soil. They were all giving some attention to the grazing business; many of them owned fine herds of cattle, which were rapidly increasing. It required no great amount of labor to keep their stock branded and gentle, so that none might stray and be lost.

During our residence in that country we purchased our beef-cattle of the natives, who drove them in from the commons to be slaughtered. They were never stall-fed to prepare them for market, and, though brought in and butchered at all seasons of the year, we usually found them fat and tender.

The face of the country was rough and wild; it was mountainous and rugged, yet it presented a novel, variegated, and picturesque landscape. The Ozark range of mountains passes diagonally through the nation from the north-east to the south-west. The springs and rivulets rising in the hills, and flowing down the mountain sides, afforded pure and excellent water. The country, indeed, was bountifully supplied with living streams, which is an indispensable requisite in the stock-producing business.

The winters were wet but not cold; snows were very rare, even in the extreme north portion of the tribe, and when they fell would rarely cover the ground. I never saw the rivers frozen over; though the editor of a weekly newspaper, published at Van Buren, once complained bitterly of the intense and intolerably cold season. "The thermometer," said he, "is down to twenty-four degrees, and the river is frozen half over!" But his statement was considerably exaggerated. The fruit-trees bloomed in February, and gardens were made in that month; and it was important to plant crops early, as it seldom rained much after the month of July. Autumnal rains were not very common—they were usually accompanied by such thunder and lightning as are rarely, if ever, witnessed farther north. Rains in August and September were usually attended with gusts of wind, and such an amount of electricity in the clouds as to render a thunder-storm a serious visitation. Every cloud seemed to be a galvanic battery, charged to its utmost capacity, and sending forth its irresistible currents, making the heavens to blaze and the earth to tremble beneath its power. Having been occasionally caught out in those autumnal storms, we were fully prepared to appreciate their grandeur and sublimity.

CHAPTER VI.

CONDITION OF THE CHOCTAWS ON THEIR REMOVAL.

THE agents employed by the Government to carry the Indians to the territory, were also required to furnish supplies of provisions for them, for one year after their arrival at their new homes.

The journey was long, tedious, and fatiguing. Travel-worn and discouraged, they finally reached the lands designated for them.

They had but few educated men, and scarcely any who were wealthy; and having mingled but little with the whites in Mississippi, there were but few half-breeds in the tribe. Intermarriages with our people had been discouraged, and but little sympathy had been cherished for the institutions of Christianity: hence in learning and in general intelligence they were quite inferior to the Cherokees. There were, however, a few educated men in the nation; and, fortunately for them, they were honest, enterprising, capable, and patriotic citizens; they were men who ardently desired the advancement and prosperity of the tribe; they were ready to labor and exert themselves to the utmost to rescue their people from their degraded and benighted condition; and yet their best endeavors were met with vehement and persistent opposition. The natives cherished and tenaciously clung to the customs and traditions of their ancestors, not pausing to bestow a thought upon the subject by way of investigation. They did not perceive the utter folly of adhering to usages which were not only senseless in themselves, but powerless to contribute to their prosperity and happiness as a people. Having witnessed so little in the white people to impress them favorably, they were resolute in their purpose to maintain lives of wild, exciting, and unfettered independence.

But in their new location they found themselves compassed about with unwonted and untold trials and afflictions. They were called to battle against overwhelming temptations, and hitherto unknown personal sufferings. It was a period of affliction and calamity which required no ordinary degree of fortitude and discipline to carry them through unscathed. They were by no means adequate to the endurance of the fiery ordeal. The history of their first year's residence in the wilderness region of the west must remain forever unwritten; for there is no language that can express the anguish and sorrow which they were called to endure, while prostrated with malignant bilious fevers, which prevailed to a fearful extent. Without shelter to protect them, and with but little medical aid, and very few of the comforts of life, they fell beneath the stroke of the destroyer, perishing in great numbers.

Being destitute of the discipline of education and moral training to qualify them for the excitements and perils through which they had been doomed to pass in their journey to the territory, and during the period of their unsettled condition, it was not remarkable that intemperance and licentiousness, with other excesses, should cut off scores and hundreds in the meridian of life.

Their future seemed dark and foreboding, rendering them gloomy and desponding. Their strong men confessed themselves to be "weak and helpless as women and children." They could discover nothing in store for them but want, wretchedness, and annihilation—their courage was gone and despair was settling down upon their spirits.

Then it was in the hour of their extremity that they began to look to education and Christianity as their only refuge—their only hope. If civilization did not rescue the remnant of their once mighty and proud race, they were doomed to speedy and utter extinction. This was their only hope, for all other refuge had utterly failed them; they were thus brought to realize their forlorn and wretched condition, and were even ready to make a vigorous effort in favor of Christian civilization. Such were the views and sentiments which were gaining and spreading throughout the tribe. But opposition was not wholly given up; a remnant of paganism still remained, a love of heathen rites and practices still lingered in the tribe. Mo-shu-la-tub-bee, one of the chiefs, headed the opposition; and, choosing the northern district as his home, he called upon all who entertained his views to rally around him and settle within the limits of his division of their territory. That district was named Moshulatubbee, in honor of its first chief. It thus received and long retained the unenviable appellation of the "heathen district;" it embraced about a fourth of their lands and, probably, a fourth of the people. It had a capital, or seat of justice, which was called "Ayakni-achukma," a word signifying *good ground.*

CHAPTER VII.

CHARACTER.

THE Choctaws were quiet and peaceable among themselves, and no less so in their bearing and intercourse with neighboring tribes. They were ordinarily temperate in their habits, yet on "pay-day" and other public occasions, they would, if it were possible, procure *oko-ho-ma*—whisky—and indulge in a "*big drunk*." The United States agent and the officers of the tribe were indefatigable in their efforts to prevent the introduction and traffic of intoxicating liquors among them. The contraband article was, however, sometimes smuggled into the country, when its effects were soon visible. We rarely saw one intoxicated during our sojourn in the country; they were a law-abiding people, rendering a cheerful and ready obedience to the authorities and laws of the country. They recognized their obligations to their government in all departments, and the officers of the nation were uniformly treated with the deference and respect which should ever characterize good citizens and loyal subjects. Antiquated rites and pagan ceremonies were almost wholly discarded; the ancient Indian funeral rites were still, in rare instances, observed by the least intelligent portion of the tribe; and, though less advanced in education and in the arts of civilized life than the Cherokees, yet in their steady, persevering, and resolute purpose to become an educated, intelligent, and respectable people they stood in the van of the border tribes.

The Choctaws have retained their Indian blood in its purity with rare exceptions. It is believed that they have amalgamated less with the whites than any other tribe who have lived so long upon reserved lands, in such close proximity to Anglo-Saxon neighbors. They have given but little encouragement to strangers to settle with them, or engage in traffic with their people. A foreigner is never adopted, not even when he has married a wife in the tribe. He is still an alien; and, though permitted to make a home and engage in business in the territory, yet he may not hold office nor can he vote at an election. The wife never takes his name, and the children are called after the mother, and receive all their national rights and privileges through her. They were equally averse to all alliances and intermarriage with other Indian tribes; family and national connections and intercourse were studiously avoided. A remarkable illustration of this trait of character came under our own observation. In the month of June, 1843, a grand council of the border tribes was convened at *Tahlequah*, the Cherokee council-ground. There were delegates assembled representing more than twenty distinct tribes; they had come from the sources of the Missouri, in the north, and from Red river, in the south. The object of the convention was to adopt a code of international law for the regulation of the tribes in their intercourse with each other. They wished to become more intimately acquainted, to cultivate social ties, to cherish their common interests, and "to brighten the chain of friendship." The hoary-headed and venerable sires, the vigorous and athletic in the meridian of life, the active and sprightly young men, the women and children, were assembled in council to "talk," to "smoke," to "shake hands," and to call each other "friend" and "brother." But there were no Choctaws in that convocation; they treated the affair with supreme contempt; and when asked, "Why did you not meet in the great camp, to sit by the council fires and hold a grand talk with your red brothers?" they promptly replied, "We no want to make travel to Cherokee council-ground, to stay whole week to make big *talk* and big *drunk!* we much love to stay at home and 'tend to our own business."

But this strong disinclination to mingle socially and familiarly with others must not be attributed to unkind or hostile sentiments, but rather to a firmness of purpose to manage their own affairs according to their own convictions of propriety.

Men belonging to other tribes were received by the Choctaws in the spirit of friendship, and always treated with courtesy and kindness. Such persons might travel through the nation with perfect safety, living upon the hospitalities of the natives. While they entertained and cherished toward all the spirit of forbearance and friendship, they only *loved* their own people. Of the border tribes it is believed that none were more honest, upright, and truthful, and there were none more correct in their deportment and bearing toward their neighbors.

Names with the Indians are not usually arbitrary and meaningless, as with us; they are intended to be characteristic, being suggested by some incident, some family trait, or some fancied peculiarity of a child. The name, if intended to be characteristic of the family, becomes patronymic, but if of the *child* only it is limited to the single person to whom it is given. A single illustration will serve to show what we mean. One of our local preachers was called *Achuk-mabbee*, which is a compound word, and *literally* translated signifies "*kill it good*," but more liberally rendered it is "*good hunter.*" This was a patronymic, and, no doubt, derived from some successful feats in slaughtering the buffalo, the bear, the deer, or valor and prowess in war.

It was a prevailing practice with most of the tribes to bestow upon *visitors* significant names or appellations. This custom was most prevalent with the Cherokees, who seldom failed to confer a title upon white ministers who should chance to impress them favorably or otherwise. When the Rev. E. R. Ames, the Corresponding Secretary of the Missionary Society, passed through their nation, preaching after his usual loud, earnest, and eloquent style, he was known as "*Big Thunder.*" That name they will never forget; if the Bishop should *now*, after an absence of almost twenty years, visit that tribe, his old friends will hail him still as "*Big Thunder;*" for with them that is his appropriate name. I knew another minister, who impressed them very differently, and they conferred upon him the *sobriquet* of "*Gar-fish;*" it was significant and appropriate.

The custom of tattooing and painting was not practiced by any of the tribes on the borders, as they believed themselves to be sufficiently comely and interesting without any resort to art to add to their beauty and their charms.

Jewelry and beads were universally worn by the females, but feathers were not worn in the hair, nor rings in the nose, by any of them. The mothers carried their infant children upon their backs under their blankets, but not lashed to boards.

Physically the Choctaws were not large and well-developed men, but were inferior to the Cherokees, Creeks, and Seminoles. They were below the medium hight, were straight and neat in person, having small and well-formed hands and feet. Their physiognomy indicated good intellect, their heads being of medium size and well-balanced; their features were smooth and the expression of the face pleasant; in this respect they were second to none whose acquaintance we made. They were rather lean in person, lithe and active, especially the males. I do not remember to have seen one full-blooded Choctaw man who was, by any means, stout and corpulent. The females were larger, in proportion, than the males; they were less neat and not usually favored with as smooth and regular features. As they advanced in years they became stout and fleshy in person. Both males and females usually dressed after the fashion of the whites on the frontiers, except that hats and bonnets were utterly ignored. We have seen females dressed in rich silks and in good taste, except that the civilized head-dress was wanting; a rich shawl or handkerchief, or a parasol, was used to cover the head; nothing more could be tolerated. They were all equestrians, men, women, and children; each had his pony and saddle, and to ride on horseback was the first lesson ever learned. They rode in a gallop, and usually at the utmost speed of which the pony was capable. Young girls would leap from the ground into the saddle with the greatest facility, and dash off at full speed of the horse in the most reckless manner; but we never knew a man, woman, or child to be thrown from the saddle or to receive any injury in their equestrian performances. Their horses were all of the mustang or native stock, small, well-formed, and hardy creatures; they handled their ponies so much and so carefully that they gained a complete mastery over them, so that it was not difficult to govern them.

CHAPTER VIII.

NEW SCHOOL SYSTEM.

It will be remembered that at the session of the General conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the month of May, 1840, four Secretaries, or agents, were appointed to serve under the direction of the Missionary Board of our Church. Rev. E. R. Ames was appointed to the western portion of the work. The Secretaries were expected to travel extensively, to address the Churches on the subject of missions, to labor to arouse the people to a sense of their duty, to learn the wants of the destitute, and to devise means for the support of such new missions as the parent Board should feel authorized to establish.

The office involved immense responsibilities, no less than herculean labor. The western Secretary, after carefully consulting the map of his field, determined to explore the entire western frontier from the northern lakes to the Gulf of Mexico. A faithful history of that prospecting tour would of itself be a volume of intense and thrilling interest.

Mr. Ames left his family at his residence, in Greencastle, Indiana, and, traveling by coach to St. Louis, he took passage on a steamboat bound for the upper Mississippi. He ascended the river to the head of steam navigation, visiting the frontier settlements and all the Indian tribes on the tributaries of the Mississippi. As there were Indians located further up, and near the sources of the smaller rivers, he procured a canoe and native oarsmen to ascend the streams as far as possible. It was not an unusual occurrence to take the canoe upon their shoulders, and make a portage from one river or creek across the country to another, where they would launch their craft and navigate its waters as far as desirable or possible. Thus every tribe was visited, and the condition, wants, and prospects of each were ascertained.

In those travels he secured provisions as best he could; he frequently procured a scanty supply of jerked venison and hominy of the natives of the forest, cooked it by their camp-fire, and, seated with them upon the ground, ate it with a relish only known to those familiar with the hardships and privations of pioneer life. Mr. Ames and his dusky companions would sometimes be so fortunate as to procure a joint of fresh meat, which, broiled upon the coals, was regarded as a luxury of no ordinary character. They slept as they ate, in the open air, under the outspreading branches of some giant tree of the forest. Mr. Ames was sometimes forced to put himself on short allowance, and once or twice to proclaim a fast.

Having reached the highest point of bark-canoe navigation on one of the western rivers, the Secretary felicitated himself upon having reached *new ground;* he was evidently *now* in "the regions beyond," of which he had read and which his heart had yearned to reach, where he should not be compelled to "build upon another man's foundation." He could discover no footprints of the missionary of Christ; there were no visible marks of civilization. While busily engaged in cooking his dinner at the camp-fire he was secretly rejoicing in his success in reaching a *field* of labor hitherto unknown, when he heard a voice, the intonations of which were both strange and familiar. He paused to listen, and then heard the words distinctly; he looked and saw, at a few rods distant, an athletic Indian, seated at the root of a tree, singing, with a zeal and unction that was refreshing to an earnest Christian,

"Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger,
Interposed his precious blood."

The missionary had been there before the Secretary; the signs were infallible. Mr. Ames yielded the point, and, hailing the native convert as a brother in the Lord, he invited him to share his dinner with him, spread out upon the grass.

From the tribes on the Mississippi the Secretary traveled down the western border toward the south, visiting the Indian tribes on the Missouri and its tributaries. He called at the various missions and learned their plans of operation, their past history, and their prospects present and future. Taking leave of the Shawnees, Delawares, Kaws, and Kickapoos, he continued his journey further south, making the acquaintance of the Pottawattomies and Osages, on the Osage river; he next called at the settlement of a mixed tribe of Shawnees and Senecas, who were located near the south-west corner of the state of Missouri. In that vicinity there was, also, a small remnant of Quapaws. He was now on the border of the Cherokee nation, and, as he was anxious to make the acquaintance of their most influential and worthy men, he went directly to *Tahlequah*, the council-ground of the nation.

Remaining at the capital sufficiently long to visit and converse with the chief, the judges, agent, and old missionaries, he pursued his journey still farther south, and finally came to the Choctaw tribe. As their territory extended from the Arkansas river to Red river his travels extended no further; as Texas, at that period, was an independent republic, he did not conceive it to be his duty to prosecute his work any further in that direction. That long and tedious journey was through a wilderness country, occupied only by Indian tribes. He traveled in the bark canoe, on foot with his baggage upon his shoulders, and on the backs of the mustang ponies.

His food consisted of various articles, affording some variety, although the courses at any single meal were by no means numerous. The table furniture was of a primitive character, consisting of wooden platters, a tin or leather cup, a wooden, bark, or buffalo horn-spoon; and in lieu of towels and napkins, they dried their dishes and hands upon the grass.

But in the Choctaw tribe Mr. Ames received better accommodations than were to be obtained further north; for he was cordially invited to partake bountifully of the never-failing "*tom-ful-la*"—a preparation of sour hominy—and he had the use of a *buffalo horn-spoon all to himself*.

He traveled without weapons and alone over a region of country where no United States officer would dare to go without a military escort.

The Secretary first made the acquaintance and gained the confidence of Major Armstrong, who was Superintendent of Indian Affairs, and also Agent for the Choctaws. Through Mr. Armstrong he obtained an introduction to the chiefs and other influential men of the tribe. He inquired into their financial condition, learned the extent of their annuities and of their power to control them, and also the amount of their school funds. His next step was to visit the national council, which was in session at the time. By frequent conversations with the most talented and best educated men in the council, he prepared their minds to receive favorably a new school system which he originated. It met the cordial approbation of the agent and the chiefs. A bill was accordingly drawn up chartering for a period of twenty years three seminaries of learning, for males and females, in which the children should be boarded, clothed, and taught both a knowledge of books and of useful manual labor. For the support of these academies liberal appropriations were made from their annuities. There was to be an academy located in each district. The fourth district was occupied by the Chickasaws; and as they kept their annuities and school funds separate from the Choctaws, no school was established by the council for them. They were left to act for themselves in the matter. They were abundantly able to educate their own children.

One of the seminaries thus chartered was to be under the exclusive supervision of the council—it was to be a national school. The other two were to be under the supervision of the Methodist Episcopal Church. A board of trustees was appointed by the council, consisting of three chiefs and one trustee from each district. The board took the oversight of all the schools. Spencer Academy was located in *Puck-che-nub-bee* district; it was under the direction of the council. *Nun-na-wa-ya* Academy was to be located in the *Push-ma-ta-ha* district. Fort Coffee was the academy for *Mo-shu-la-tub-bee* district. To each of the last-named two schools the council made an annual appropriation of six thousand dollars out of their annuities; and the Missionary Board of the Methodist Episcopal Church made an appropriation of one thousand dollars annually to each of them. The teachers of those academies were to be chosen by the authorities of the Church; but the trustees alone were authorized to select the pupils, and to take such oversight of the schools as to secure the attainment of the objects contemplated in the charter. And although they could not discharge or dismiss any of the officers or teachers, yet they might officially report to the national council, who were competent, for sufficient cause, to withhold the appropriations and abolish the charter. Each seminary was designed for the whole tribe, and not for the exclusive benefit of the particular district in which it was to be located. Such an arrangement was necessary to prevent jealousies, rivalries, and animosities of the several districts.

A special provision of the school act secured to orphans the preference, when a greater number should apply for admission to the schools than could be received. And other things being equal, small boys had the preference over larger ones, because they were considered more promising in every respect.

CHAPTER IX.

FORT COFFEE ACADEMY.

In the month of March, 1848, Rev. William H. Goode was appointed Superintendent of Fort Coffee Academy, and Henry C. Benson was appointed teacher. At the time, the former was presiding elder of South Bend district, and the latter was the junior preacher of Mooresville circuit; both were of the Indiana conference. We were regularly transferred by Bishop Soule to the Arkansas conference.

Mr. Goode made provision for his family during his absence, and immediately set out upon his journey for his distant field of labor. He went to Cincinnati, where he procured the necessary outfit and supplies for the mission, employed a young German man and wife to accompany him, as cook and housekeeper, and then started by water for the Indian territory. From Cincinnati to the mouth of the Ohio is five hundred miles; thence descending the Mississippi, to the little town of Napoleon, is four hundred miles; thence ascending the Arkansas river six hundred miles, you reach Fort Coffee, in the Choctaw country. Thus, it will be seen that the distance from Cincinnati to our mission field was fifteen hundred miles by the usual route or course of travel.

Fort Coffee was an old military post, which had been occupied by the troops before the western boundary of Arkansas was surveyed; but in 1838, when the state line had been definitely fixed, it was abandoned, and the present site of Fort Smith was chosen and immediately occupied as the headquarters of the south-western division of the United States army.

The buildings which had been erected at Fort Coffee, for the temporary accommodation of the officers and soldiers, were cheap, frail, and unsubstantial. They were constructed of hewed logs, were one story in hight, had porches in front and rear, were covered with shingles, floored with rough boards, had batten-doors and window-shutters, and rough stone chimneys built on the outside of the houses; they were arranged in the form of a hollow-square, the inside lines of which measured one hundred feet. There were passages or avenues at each corner of the parallelogram; the fourth side, or line, was left entirely open, as it commanded a view of the river, except that in its center there was a small structure which had served as a magazine for the Fort.

The river at that place forms nearly a semicircle, embracing an area of eight or ten acres, in the center of which the buildings had been erected. The site was at least one hundred feet above the water, while the land immediately contiguous, above and below, was low and level, and covered with heavy timber and brushwood, forming an impenetrable thicket. At the point of the promontory the river bank was a bluff or wall of solid rock, rising, almost perpendicularly, sixty-four feet above low-water mark. The edge of this bold precipice was bordered with a growth of old cedars, the roots of which had penetrated the fissures and crevices of the rocks. Their gnarled trunks and scraggy branches were weather-beaten and hoary with years. Upon the most conspicuous spot a *guard-house* has been built, surmounted with a tower, from which boats might be seen on the river for a considerable distance; we left it still perched upon the rocks, but in a dilapidated condition. The entire grounds were most beautifully shaded by forest trees, which had mercifully escaped "the woodsman's ax." There were oaks, hickory, black-locusts, box-elders, old elms, cedars, pines, persimmons, and walnuts; they were not large, except the elms, the trunks of which had been cut off about thirty feet from the ground, causing them to throw out their branches, forming a dense and beautiful shade. The oaks, pines, and cedars were of a small growth, and all had been carefully pruned, and many of them were ornamented with a luxuriant growth of mistletoe, which flourished alike in winter and summer. The ground was, indeed, a magnificent park, the more lovely and romantic because it was natural. God himself had planted it according to his own infinite wisdom and taste. A rich sward of blue grass covered the earth's surface, remaining green during the entire winter; it had, doubtless, been sown by the officers of the army. After we took possession of the premises the grounds were inclosed with a substantial picket-fence, and kept free from litter and rubbish.

Mr. Goode arrived at Fort Coffee about the middle of April, 1843. Himself and supplies, the German family, and two or three friends from Fort Smith, were landed upon the rocks just above the old vacated fort, where they lighted a fire and prepared to encamp for the night. Having prepared their supper and refreshed themselves, they thought appropriate to have a season of singing and prayer. A portion of God's word was read, after which all united in singing that beautiful hymn, written by Charles Wesley,

"See how great a flame aspires,
  Kindled by a spark of grace!
Jesus' love the nations fires—
  Sets the kingdoms on a blaze.
To bring fire on earth he came;
  Kindled in some hearts it is:
O that all might catch the flame,
  All partake the glorious bliss!

When he first the work begun,
  Small and feeble was his day:
Now the word doth swiftly run:
  Now it wins its widening way:
More and more it spreads and grows,
  Ever mighty to prevail;
Sin's strongholds it now o'erthrows—
  Shakes the trembling gates of hell.

Sons of God, your Savior praise!
  He the door hath opened wide;
He hath given the word of grace;
  Jesus' word is glorified.

Jesus, mighty to redeem,
He alone the work hath wrought;
Worthy is the work of him—
Him who spake a world from naught.

Saw ye not the cloud arise,
Little as a human hand?
Now it spreads along the skies—
Hangs o'er all the thirsty land;
Lo! the promise of a shower
Drops already from above;
But the Lord will shortly pour
All the spirit of his love."

At the close of the singing they united in earnest supplications and prayers for God's blessing to rest upon the mission and upon all who should be engaged in that interesting and responsible work. It was an appropriate occasion in which to renew spiritual vows and covenants, and to make an entire consecration to the cause of the blessed Redeemer. That was probably the first prayer meeting ever held in the Moshulatubbee district of the Choctaw nation. There, upon the bank of the river, on the farthest verge of civilization, entirely beyond the white settlements, praises and prayers ascended to the ear of Him who has promised to give the heathen to his Son for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. At the close of their season of worship they spread their blankets upon the earth, and committed themselves to the care and kind protection of a covenant-keeping God. Thus was passed the first night of Mr. Goode in the Indian territory.

When the morning came the goods were carried up to the buildings, and the work of cleansing and repairing the rooms was vigorously commenced. Having been abandoned for several years, they were found to be in a wretched condition, and entirely unsuited to the wants and necessities of the mission. The rooms were found to have *leaky* and decayed roofs, the windows and doors were broken, the plaster was out of the chinks, the porches and floors were almost rotten, and the walls and chimneys only were found to be in good condition. All must undergo thorough repairs before they could be comfortably occupied; but how could material be obtained? There was not a saw-mill in the northern district of the tribe, and none on the Cherokee side of the river in the vicinity. Then lumber and lime must be shipped from Fort Smith or Van Buren, which would delay the commencement of the work for a number of days. In the mean time the best rooms were selected, and temporary repairs were made, so as to render them habitable till the more thorough rebuilding should be done. A few hands were employed, and all went to work with a will; the pressing necessity was felt by all, and, hence, each one was energetic and faithful in his work. A small field had been cleared and inclosed for the production of vegetables for the army, but the fencing had fallen down, and was almost rotten, while briers and bushes had grown up over the ground which had once been cultivated. The season for planting would soon be past, but, as it was very desirable to produce vegetables for the mission, hands were set to the work of repairing the fencing, and preparing the field for the plow. A yoke of cattle, with a stout plow, in the hands of an experienced farmer, soon prepared the soil to receive the seed. It was planted in corn, pumpkins, beans, peas, potatoes, yams, and melons; the field embraced about ten acres, the soil of which was very productive. The work was all fairly commenced, good hands were employed, the material for the repairs was all procured, when, two months having elapsed, Mr. Goode prepared to return to Indianapolis for his family and furniture for the school.

CHAPTER X.

JOURNEY TO THE INDIAN COUNTRY.

IT had been arranged that I should remain on my circuit till the middle of May, and then take the coach for St. Louis, and thence ascend the Missouri river to Fort Leavenworth; from that place I should visit the Indian Manual-Labor School in the Shawnee tribe, in order to become acquainted with their plans of operation, and best methods of imparting instruction to children who did not yet understand our language. My instructions directed me to travel by land from the Shawnee tribe, through the Indian country, to Fort Coffee, a distance of three hundred miles.

As my duty would be to teach, it was supposed that my services in the mission would not be required till the time of the opening of the Academy. My arrangements were made accordingly. I was almost ready to set out upon that tedious, romantic, and somewhat perilous journey, when a letter was received from Mr. Goode, which wholly changed the plan. He wished me to come directly to Fort Coffee, as my services were required immediately. His arrangement was made to leave on the twentieth of June, to go for his family. He would travel the route which had been designated for me; and it was arranged that I should take his place, and superintend the repairs and improvements at Fort Coffee during his absence.

Having taken leave of the kind friends of Mooresville circuit, and made a short visit to my parents and friends, Mrs. Benson and myself set out on the eighth day of June upon our journey to the Indian country. We reached the Ohio river at the Falls, and went on board a steamer at Louisville on the thirteenth day of the month. As there was no boat bound for the Arkansas river, we were forced to take one destined for New Orleans. The Ohio was in a flooded condition, caused by the late and unusually heavy rains. There were immense quantities of driftwood, which rendered it perilous at night, owing to the darkness caused by the dense fogs which prevailed.

On board we were introduced to the Rev. J. D. M., a local preacher of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who resided at Jackson, Mississippi. He had been to Cincinnati to place his two daughters in the Female Collegiate Institute. Mr. M. seemed to be an intelligent and earnest Christian; antislavery and conservative in his principles.

On the morning of the 17th our steamboat landed on the east bank of the river to take on board a lot of negroes, who were shipped for a cotton farm on Red river, Texas. As we should be delayed an hour while the chattels were taken aboard and stowed away, I went ashore to make observations. I had never before had a view of a cotton plantation, extensive and well-worked. The land was remarkably level, with a rich, deep alluvial soil. The river served as a fence on one side of the farm. The cotton was growing beautifully, and not a weed was to be seen. Every thing gave indication of energy, intelligence, and thrift.

The family residence was about two hundred yards from the river. It was an elegant mansion, of the style which prevails in the south. It was almost square, with flat roof, concealed by balustrades. The balconies seemed to encircle it; while its long verandas were embowered with roses, jasmine, and honeysuckles. The ornamental shrubs and plants were of the greatest variety and most luxuriant growth. The shades were apparently cool, delicious, and inviting, being made by the China-tree, the catalpa, and others which are only found in the south.

About midway between the "house" and the river, a little to the south, stood the "quarters," or cabins, which were occupied by the servants. There was a cluster of them, numbering perhaps thirty, of uniform size and appearance. They were frames, about twelve or fourteen feet square, with steep board roofs. They were white, neat, and comfortable on the outside; and if we had judged from what we saw in the externals of the "quarters," we might have been led to regard slavery as a beautiful, humane, and merciful institution.

But we were only gazing upon "whited sepulchers;" we saw the other side; "within they were full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." On that morning cords were to be severed—ties were to be sundered—families were to be divided—separations were to be made, which contemplated no reunions till master and slave, parent and child, husband and wife, all should stand before the dread tribunal. A band of negroes—a part of the family—were to be sent a thousand miles away, to plow, hoe, gather, and pick cotton for another master.

The overseer soon had them assembled on the bank of the river, where adieus were hastily spoken, farewell tears were shed, and last embraces given. There were about sixty destined to go to Red river. They were men, women, and children, of all descriptions and ages, from the hoary-headed and decrepit old man down to the infant which clung to the mother's breast. They were stowed away in the lower portions of the boat among the cotton bales, flour barrels, and hen-coops. They were measurably indifferent, stupid, and stoical; and although they were almost in a nude state, and indecently exposed, yet they were apparently as incapable of the sense of shame as so many cattle would have been under similar circumstances. Those negroes were in the care of a very genteel (?) young man, who sported a gold watch and any number of costly rings upon his fingers, and who, no doubt, could trace his lineal descent from one of "the first families."

At four o'clock, Saturday, the nineteenth of the month, we arrived at Napoleon, which is situated on the west bank of the Mississippi, at the mouth of the Arkansas.

Here we were doomed to stop, and wait, how long no one knew, for a boat to ascend the river, and carry us to our destination. At all events we escaped traveling on the Sabbath; to that extent we were thankful. Suspense is always horrible, but it was more with us—it amounted almost to agony—situated as we were on the border of a "*dismal swamp*" on the Mississippi, late in the month of June. The little village was built up on the brink of the river, the banks of which were so low that it required but a moderate swell of its volume to send navigable currents around and also through the center of the town. In the rear of Napoleon there were low marsh lands, extending back for a score of miles, that were not inhabited. In that dense jungle of timber and brushwood there might have been wild beasts without number, of the most ravenous and formidable character for aught we could know, for it was impenetrable. Of one part we were painfully cognizant; it generated musketoes by the million—not the diminutive and insignificant species known further north, but genuine gallinippers of vigorous and huge proportions. By waging a ceaseless warfare against them we succeeded in preserving life, but were alarmingly reduced by our daily loss of blood. *Depletion* by *venesection* is *secundum artem* in the allopathic school of medicine, but in that particular case it was manifestly *empirical.* We were daily relieved of several ounces of blood. At first we were puzzled to determine how it would be possible for us to take food, as our hands were employed every moment in battling with the enemy. But our landlord had suspended a number of pasteboards with paper pendants, at convenient distances from each other over the dinner table. These pasteboard *rattlers* were attached to each other by wires; and a little negro lad stood at each end of the table with a cord in his hand, the end of which was attached to the musketo machine, and by learning each other's motion, they would pull back and forth, keeping the papers rattling just before our faces. By that contrivance we were enabled to eat with considerable comfort, as there were not more than a score of gallinippers permitted to prey upon any one of us at a time.

But having finished our meals we resumed the fight in good earnest, from which we had not a moment's respite till we were inside the netting which was to be our cage for the night. Even then we had but little refreshment, for the weather was so intensely warm that we could scarcely rest or sleep till the dawn of the morning.

There were a number of persons, like ourselves, detained, waiting for a boat to ascend the Arkansas. One fine old gentleman, from Nashville, especially excited our sympathy. He was quite corpulent and a little lame, and consequently not sufficiently active to carry on the war to advantage. He had been at Napoleon four days at the period of our arrival, "waging the unequal strife," and his courage and strength were well-nigh exhausted. Pine Bluffs was his destination, where he owned a cotton plantation, stocked with negroes, and worked by a Yankee overseer. The old gentleman was carrying some improved stock to his farm; he had a few fine pigs, a pair of young dogs, supposed to be blood-hounds, and a well-developed negro "boy" about forty years of age. He kept his dogs and *boy* chained securely in the wood shed.

The second day of our detention was the Sabbath, and a consultation was held in the morning, as to whether or not there should be preaching. But, upon examination, the little school-house in the outskirts of the village was found to be inaccessible; for a strong current of water, which flowed through the center of the town, could not be crossed. In the afternoon we had an invitation from the proprietor of the other hotel to have preaching in his bar-room. In a few minutes the congregation was assembled, occupying the room and front porch. There it was my privilege to publish the glad tidings of salvation for the first time west of the *father of waters*. The congregation numbered about fifty souls, a fourth of whom were travelers, waiting the arrival of boats to carry them forward to their several points of destination.

On Monday at dinner we found the corpulent old gentleman greatly depressed in spirits—his strength was rapidly failing him. He had fought the muskatoes vigorously and heroically, but proved unequal to the conflict. "I have been here," said he, "six days fighting these bloodthirsty gallinippers, night and day, without intermission—I can't stand it any longer—they will certainly kill me. Now, if a Cumberland river boat should come to-day I shall return home directly." In less than an hour a Nashville boat came, and the old planter took his *boy* and dogs and returned homeward, thoroughly disgusted with Napoleon and the contiguous swamp. In less than two hours after his departure the ardently-desired Arkansas boat came, and our relief and joy at getting away were without bounds.

Our hearts swelled with grateful emotions at our deliverance from the foul water, the tainted meat, the intolerable heat, the malarious atmosphere, and the countless myriads of noxious insects that swarmed on the margin of that pestilential lagoon. Our devout prayer was that we might never again be doomed, in midsummer, to spend three days upon the border of a Mississippi swamp. On going aboard the boat we were introduced to two of the dignitaries of the sovereign state of Arkansas—Colonel Sevier, of the United States senate, and Judge Johnson, of the house of representatives. They were returning from Washington City. Colonel Sevier we knew to be a man of marked ability, whose influence was felt and fully recognised in the senate. He was in the meridian of life, a stout, well-developed, social gentleman, quite communicative, jovial, and somewhat facetious in his intercourse with his friends. Judge Johnson was a brother of the Hon. R. M. Johnson, of Kentucky. He was tall, lean, and bony in person; dignified and gentlemanly in deportment. It was impossible to form a judgment with reference to his talent, for he was by no means inclined to enter into conversation with any one—his reserve amounted to taciturnity.

There was one other gentleman on board scarcely less distinguished than Sevier and Johnson. It was General Arbuckle, at that time Commander-in-chief of the Southern Division of the United States army; his headquarters were in the vicinity of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He was going up to his farm in the vicinity of Dardanelle, some distance above Little Rock city. He had a servant, a fine horse, a supply of guns and ammunition, and a pair of dogs. His purpose was to spend the summer season in shooting and hunting the game in the neighborhood of his cotton plantation. The General was a single man, about eighty years of age, tall and well-formed, with a bright countenance, indicating perfect health and temperate habits. He was very affable and gentlemanly, and seemed devoted to literature and the ladies.

Shortly after that period General Arbuckle was succeeded by General Zachary Taylor in the Southern Division, and he was placed in command of the South-Western Division, making his headquarters at Fort Smith, where I afterward frequently saw him.

In ascending the river toward our point of destination, we first entered White river at Montgomery's Point, and running up a few miles, we came to what is known as the "Cross Cut," which is a natural canal uniting White river with the Arkansas. Our boat passed through the "Cross Cut" into the Arkansas river. We might have entered the latter river at its mouth; boats enter either the one or the other as they choose. White river, though not large, is navigable up to Batesville, a distance of about four hundred miles.

For many miles we were passing through low, level marsh lands, that were subject to frequent inundations, to an extent that rendered them worthless for agricultural or grazing purposes. The river seemed to be without current, having the appearance of a pool or lagoon formed from the waters of the Mississippi.

As we ascended the river we saw but few indications of settlement or civilization. All was wild, rough, and desolate, on both sides of the river, as far as sight could extend. The soil was a deep, rich alluvial deposit of unsurpassed fertility. The growth of cottonwood, willows, swamp oak, cane, and brushwood was of the most astonishing character; but there was a dearth of inhabitants—the solitude was undisturbed.

Late in the afternoon of the first day after leaving the Mississippi we came to the "Arkansas Post," where the French, in an early day, located a small colony, and made some improvement. The "Post" was older than Cincinnati, yet was an insignificant village, and utterly destitute of all legitimate claim to taste, thrift, or enterprise. Our boat came to and tied up for an hour, to deliver a few packages of goods to an old French merchant, who, in appearance, very much resembled the old Hollanders of New York, and might readily have been mistaken for a lineal descendant of the venerable Rip Van Winkle. His black servants came down to take charge of the goods. They were a tatterdemalion set of *boys*, clothed in garments supposed to have been made of cast-off gunny-bags. But as the *boys* were remarkably jolly and garrulous, and exhibited their shining ivory, making their thrusts of wit and repartee with indescribable gusto, we concluded that their Gallic lord was merciful in his treatment of them, and so we refrained from shedding tears of sympathy.

Supper being announced, the venerable Monsieur took a seat at the table, and went to work with a relish and an energy that did honor even to a Frenchman. Before the supper was finished he had disposed of two entire bottles of wine. It was evident that he had been thirsty for a length of time.

As we continued our journey up the river we saw an occasional field, with a smoky log-cabin, and then a swamp or considerable stretch of forest. We rarely saw a cotton-field till we had reached the Pine Bluffs neighborhood. In that country agriculturists do not reside upon *farms*—they are all "plantations." Even the small squatter in the woods or canebrake, with his smoky hut and few acres of corn and pumpkins, aspires to the dignity and title of a *planter*.

Around Pine Bluffs we saw a few fine farms, in a good state of cultivation. There were large and comfortable family residences, surrounded by orchards, ornamental shades, and other evidences of taste and intelligence.

We finally came to Little Rock, the capital of the state. We had ascended the river three hundred miles, passing only two small villages, the united population of which could not exceed three hundred souls. The capital had a respectable state-house, a court-house, and a prison, and a number of other permanent and tasteful edifices. There were a few elegant family residences in the outskirts of the city, and good farms in the neighborhood. But we could not resist the conviction that we were journeying through a wilderness region, which neither industry, enterprise, nor wealth would ever redeem from its barren, rugged, and inhospitable condition. Subsequent travels through various portions of the state only served to strengthen the conviction, that a very considerable part of that country is, and must be regarded as waste lands for ages to come. The lands generally would be of some value for grazing purposes, and a few of the counties have rich, arable, and well-watered lands; but the sterile sections are much more extensive, while the fertile bottoms, on the large rivers, are rendered almost worthless by reason of the floods to which they are liable in midsummer.

As we continued to ascend the Arkansas we narrowly watched for evidences of enterprise and indications of promise for the future; but we looked almost in vain. In the journey of three hundred miles, from Little Rock to the western border, there were but three or four small villages, the entire business of which would probably not equal that of a single country store and blacksmith shop located at a *cross-roads*, in any populous community in a northern state.

Van Buren and Fort Smith are not included in these remarks, as they were situated on the border, and dependent for their success on the Indian trade. The former stands on the north side of the river, three miles from the Cherokee line. It was unquestionably, in point of commercial importance, the first town of the state. Fort Smith was also a brisk and stirring village, on the south bank of the river, three miles further up, and directly on the Choctaw line.

Those towns were both built up and sustained by the Indian annuities, and the moneys expended in erecting the military fortifications and for the support of the troops. Let the annuities and the army appropriations be withheld, and those rapidly-increasing and flourishing cities will be abandoned before five years. The sources of wealth are not in the country; they are external, borne to it, and then divided out among the most enterprising and unscrupulous, not a few of whom are genuine Yankees, born and bred in the vicinity of Plymouth Rock and almost within sight of the Bunker Hill Monument.

At these points there were many intelligent, well-educated, and interesting families—a few of whom were pious and devoted to the work of advancing and building up the Redeemer's cause and kingdom in that land. Nearly all of those who had been born and educated in New England were slaveholders. Men who in Massachusetts would have been not merely antislavery in sentiment, but uncompromising abolitionists, were *now* slave masters, and ready to buy and sell negroes without any compunction of conscience whatever. We found a few who would speak of slavery as "a great evil," condemning it in the abstract; but we scarcely saw one who from principle alone refused to avail himself of the convenience and profits of the institution. Such, alas! is human infirmity. We are bold and fearless in the advocacy of truth when no sacrifice is demanded and no self-denial to be practiced. We are ready and courageous in wielding the sword of the Spirit when we may smite and pierce our enemy, or neighbor even, but incapable of enduring trial, and "counting all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord."

At one o'clock on the morning of the twenty-sixth of June the boat arrived at Fort Coffee, and we were put ashore, with our trunks and baggage. The captain took his lantern, and kindly conducted us up the hill to the buildings, where we succeeded in arousing the cook, who gave us a room in which to pass the remnant of the night. Thus ended our long and tedious journey to the Indian country.

CHAPTER XI.

ARRIVAL AT FORT COFFEE.

THE bell aroused us in the morning, at six o'clock, and we found ourselves the sole occupants of the building. It consisted of a single room, about twelve feet square, erected of small logs, "scotched down" with the broad-ax on the inside. The edifice was covered with "shakes," had a rough, loose floor, two windows, a batten-door, and an outside chimney, built of clay and cobble-stones.

Having hastily made our toilet, we went directly to the breakfast-table, where we saw none but strange faces, not one of whom had we seen or heard of previous to that morning. We regretted to learn that Rev. W. H. Goode, three days before our arrival, had set out upon his journey through the Indian country north to Missouri river, and thence down the river and across the country home for his family. He had expected us at the mission before his departure, but, owing to the low stage of water in the Arkansas, we had been detained and delayed a number of days, rendering our journey tedious beyond our anticipations. We had been thirteen days on the way from Louisville to the Indian country, and yet exerting ourselves to the utmost to make a speedy trip. Ordinarily eight or nine days would have been sufficient for the journey. Had we not been favored with a rise of the river, caused by the melting of the snows upon the mountains, our boat could not have ascended higher than Little Rock, and we should have been forced to make the last three hundred miles of the travel in coaches, over the mountains and rocky wilderness. Those floods usually occur about the middle of June, sometimes almost a month later in the season; or, rather, there are frequently two summer floods, caused by the melting of the snows in different sections of the Rocky Mountains. The overflow of the Nile is not more certain than that of the Arkansas river.

We found the family to consist of M. C. Cotton and wife, and A. Shults and wife. Mr. Cotton was employed as carpenter, and Mr. Shults and wife as cook and housekeeper. There were a few other hands employed, from time to time, as necessity demanded. Having finished breakfast and worshiped together, for the first time, Mr. Cotton handed me the keys of the establishment, with the information that I was Superintendent of the mission and all its interests during the absence of Mr. Goode. The cabin in which all had slept proved to be the office. On opening the desk I found full, specific, and satisfactory information relating to every interest of the mission; the plans and the details of the work were given so clearly that we were not left in doubt or uncertainty with regard to what we should do to advance the work, and consummate the designs and purposes of the Superintendent. Strict method and studied accuracy we found to be characteristic of Mr. Goode. He was scrupulously correct in all that he did, keeping his accounts posted, his will made, and his work in the most intelligible manner possible. On setting out upon a long or perilous journey he would settle all his accounts, add the necessary codicil or explanatory note to his will, and so keep himself in readiness for whatever might befall him. It has never been my privilege to know one who labored more earnestly to be always in readiness for the final summons of his Master.

Our line of duty was plain; the work was fairly commenced, hands were employed, the estimates were made, and the most of the materials were procured. It devolved upon us to execute the plans, prosecute to its completion the work laid out, and have the buildings ready for occupancy when Mr. Goode and family should arrive, that the Academy might then be open for the reception of pupils. The time set for the return of the Superintendent was the first of November. To repair the old structures was no slight or insignificant labor. The doors and windows were so broken and damaged that new ones were required, all of which the carpenter must make; the painting and glazing were done by the Superintendent *pro tempore;* the chinks required to be filled anew with mortar, the rooms must be cleansed thoroughly, and the walls whitewashed with lime. A new frame house was to be erected, thirty-eight feet in length, eighteen feet in width, and two stories in hight. It was to have porches in front and rear, and a stone chimney at each end, with fireplaces above as well as below. The house was to be divided into rooms and finished for the accommodation of two families.

The growing crop of corn and vegetables required the entire labor of one hand. To keep matters moving on smoothly and in the right direction was no ordinary task, in that country, where good and faithful hired hands are not easily procured. Where slavery exists it is exceedingly difficult to employ capable and reliable day laborers. To hire out as servants is degrading: hence good white men rarely consent to be employed. Scarcely any could be obtained except discharged soldiers and old and broken-down sailors, who had neither the will nor ability to render themselves serviceable. In times of emergency we sometimes employed Indian men and slaves to do such work as required but little skill. They felt not the slightest obligation to earn their wages: hence we were forced to exercise a vigilant supervision or their services would not compensate for their food. They were quite deliberate in their movements and not easily aroused, but there was good service in them which we made available by dint of perseverance.

But in the prosecution of our work about the field and buildings of the mission we were frequently very sorely tried by the delinquencies and incompetencies of the men employed. We were compelled to dismiss men, and run the risk of procuring others who should be more capable and faithful, and such changes frequently resulted in no advantage to the mission; they only subjected us to a repetition of our trials and perplexities.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MISSION.

At the preceding session of the Arkansas conference, which had been held at Helena, Rev. John M. Steele had been appointed to labor in the Choctaw nation, within the limits of the Moshulatubbee district. There were no societies or Churches at the time, and probably not one in the district who enjoyed the comforts of religion or that had ever been a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. There was but one small school taught in that section of their territory. There had been occasional preaching years before by Baptist ministers, but with so little encouragement that the efforts had been discontinued and the district abandoned.

In all that region of country, it is believed, there was not one living Christian, not one who knew and loved the Savior. At the period of our arrival Mr. Steele had been in the country several months, traveling extensively and laboring faithfully. He preached at different points, but usually to very small congregations. His principal preaching-places were the Choctaw Agency, Pheasant Bluffs, Ayakni-achukma, Sugar-loaf Mountain, and James's Fork. He had organized no classes, and, up to that date, had witnessed no conversions. After our arrival he preached occasionally at Fort Coffee. He was an earnest, plain, and faithful minister of Christ, who felt his responsibility and labored zealously to do the work of an evangelist. He is probably still laboring in the vineyard of the Lord. Since we last met he has been somewhat prominent as the presiding elder of a district and a member of the General conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church South.

On the second day of July we held our first class meeting at Fort Coffee. We were six in number; the little log office was our class-room, and H. C. Benson was the leader. That was a precious season unto us as we waited upon the Lord. Henceforth our religious services were uniform and regular; on Sunday morning at Fort Coffee, and in the afternoon at the New Hope school-room, one mile east of the Choctaw Agency. The appointments were five miles distant from each other.

The first Sunday we spent in the Indian nation is a day to be remembered; it is an epoch in the history of our pilgrimage. We assembled in one of the unfinished rooms for public worship. How changed our circumstances! how novel the surroundings! We numbered about twenty-five souls—whites, Choctaws, Cherokees, and a few colored servants. They had not all met to worship God, or even to hear the word preached; a number had been prompted solely by curiosity; they wished to look on and witness our ceremonies.

It was, however, an occasion of interest and solemnity to us who desired to worship in spirit and in truth. The Lord was present to bless and to cheer our hearts; and, like Jacob in the wilderness, we were constrained to exclaim, "The Lord is in this place, and I knew it not." It was, indeed, a bethel to our souls. We held our class at the close of the service, and in the afternoon preached at New Hope to a larger congregation, composed mostly of Indians and their colored servants.

The day afforded matter for serious reflection. We realized most vividly the contrast between the present and the past. We had been accustomed to large congregations of devout, intelligent Christian worshipers; we had been wont to see multitudes thronging the courts of the Lord's house; but here we had a little company, mixed and mongrel, many of whom had scarcely one clear and correct conception of the Gospel, of duty, and of God, and perhaps not one knew any thing of Christian experience! All was darkness, ignorance, gloom, and moral death! We felt that we stood alone; and yet not alone, for we remembered the precious words of the Savior, when he said to the heralds of mercy, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature; and lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

We were treated with much kindness and respect by the natives generally; they seldom failed to give us a cordial shake of the hand, the ceremony of a formal introduction being wholly dispensed with.

The colored *boys* were prompt to take our horses and to bring them up again for our use at the proper time. If the *parson* should be left to lead away his own beast and fasten him, every *boy* present would consider himself scandalized; but if the parson should neglect to speak to *cuffee*, and give him a friendly grip of the hand, he would lose *caste* with the servants, and henceforth his preaching would profit them but little.

Mr. H., an intelligent merchant, resided at the Agency, having an interesting family. He was a man of irreproachable character, and, before leaving New England, had been a member of a Unitarian Congregational Church. He was an honest business man, an educated gentleman, a warm-hearted and fast friend, and somewhat facetious in conversation. He gave us the first word of encouragement we received in connection with our missionary labors.

"Mr. B.," said he, "you are doing a good work; I already see that your labors are greatly blessed."

"Do you think so, Mr. H.? How do you judge? Where is the fruit of our labors?"

"Why," said he, "these Indians have learned what Sunday means; they now wash and comb themselves, and put on clean clothes once a week, in order to be decent and tidy at church, and they will certainly enjoy better health."

He was a man of humor, but intended much more than his language and manner seemed to express. He felt an interest in the schools and in the advancement of the natives in civilisation and Christianity. It should not be overlooked or lightly esteemed that Christianity blesses man *physically*, *intellectually*, and *morally*. There is but little decency or purity where vital piety does not dwell in the heart to mold and renovate character; it is the only fountain of purity in the universe.

CHAPTER XIII.

OUR NEIGHBORS.

OUR nearest neighbors were Cherokees, and resided on the north side of the river; their houses and farms were in view of our mission. The ferry kept at Fort Coffee was owned by a Cherokee, who lived directly opposite to our establishment. He was a shrewd man in business, a regular Shylock in his exactions. Woe betide the unlucky traveler who should venture to cross over in his boat without having first stipulated as to the fare; and even then the ferryman would fail to give back the correct change; it must be in his favor to the amount of one or two "bits" at least.

The act establishing the academies secured to each the possession of one square mile of the public domain. Upon that section no Indians were permitted to settle. The schools were established on the manual-labor principle, and the land was reserved for farming and grazing purposes for the benefit of the mission. We found, however, one Indian within the limits of our reservation; he was a full-blooded Choctaw, whose name was Jones. He had a small farm, and a cabin, which served as a shelter for his family. It would not do to dispossess him of his home, robbing him of his improvements, nor was it desirable to have him so close to our mission; for his habits were bad, and his example would be baneful and corrupting to the morals of the pupils of the Academy. The business was amicably arranged by paying Jones a fair price for his field, whereupon he pulled down his cabin and moved it a half mile further away. As he was our nearest Choctaw neighbor we soon made his acquaintance. Jones was probably over forty years of age, had a wife and grown-up daughter, and three or four young children, boys and girls. One old superannuated female slave was still regarded as an appendage of his family. Old Hannah was born in Africa, according to her own statement. She had been kidnapped, when a young girl, and brought to the United States and sold in the south. She had lived an eventful life, had passed through strange vicissitudes of fortune, had been the property of different masters, and had finally fallen into the hands of Jones before the Choctaws had been removed from their reserved lands in Mississippi. She could not tell her age, but was probably over a hundred years old, and almost as helpless as an infant child.

Jones, though apparently poor, owned a good stock of cattle and the needed supply of mustang ponies. Our mission afforded him a fine market for his surplus produce, which consisted of a quarter or a half of a veal or a cow, when hunger had forced him to bring in and slaughter a beef to furnish food for his family. He would bring us a choice piece, for which we paid him two or three cents per pound, which was the market price in that country. But once he unfortunately brought us beef on *Sunday*, just as our services closed, and before the congregation had dispersed. Coming directly to our house of worship, he wished to know if we would purchase his beef. We endeavored to explain to him that it was the Sabbath, and that it was wrong to do business on the Lord's day, but it was not possible to make him comprehend it. He was greatly confused; the subject was dark and mysterious; and he finally left the mission, doing his utmost to ascertain how it could be right to buy beef on *Saturday*, but wrong on *Sunday*.

After that occurrence Jones was greatly puzzled to know when to bring his meat to market; to keep the run of the days of the week so as to know when Sunday should come was too great a task; he could not give himself so much care and thought; but he finally adopted an expedient that worked admirably. He would slaughter his beef without reference to the day of the week, and would bring a portion of it near to the mission and hang it up in the bushes; and then he would come and ascertain the day of the week. He would look around to see how we were employed, and finally he would ask, "This Sunday?" If we should answer in the affirmative, he would carry his beef home and bring it back next morning; but if we told him it was not Sunday, he would go and bring it in for sale. When our school opened for the reception of pupils, Jones sent his little son Jim as a day scholar. On Friday evening we would direct Jim to go home and remain till he had taken three "sleeps" and then return to school. The Indians all count the days by the number of sleeps—each sleep is one day. Thus Jim assisted his father in keeping the run of Sunday—he at once became the family almanac. And it is but just to record that Jones, having learned so much, would frequently come to preaching, bringing his wife and daughter, all washed, combed, and tidily dressed for the occasion. They would not only shake hands, but would further manifest their friendly and social regards by remaining to take their Sunday dinner at our table; Jones was always friendly and well-disposed about meal time. He would sometimes drink to excess, but on such occasions rarely came to the mission, for he knew that we should disapprove of such conduct. Once, however, when we had been at Fort Coffee but a few weeks, we heard in the dusk of the evening what reminded us of the "warwhoop" of which we had read in early life. Soon we saw Jones mounted upon his mustang and coming around the field at a furious speed. He was exercising his vocal organs with most astonishing energy and vehemence. The feminine branch of our family became a little—a very little nervous. There was at least a vivid recollection of reeking *scalps*, *war-dances*, and *captivity*. But then "she was not alarmed"—of course not. I met Jones at the gate, and told him that, as he was drunk, he should not come in, but must at once go home. But he was in excellent temper, and extended his hand with the cordial salutation: "Unkonna achukma fana!"—"Very good friend!" "You doctor! chile sick heap! you bleed um—give um pill—make um well, heap quick!" I told him that I was not a physician, and should not go to see it, but he should return home immediately, and never again come to the mission when he had been drinking *okohoma*—whisky. He remembered the admonition, and we never again saw him intoxicated; on such occasions he would not come near Fort Coffee.

Cornelius Macann, a half-breed, was our next nearest neighbor; he was a well-disposed, quiet man, about fifty years of age, with grown-up children, but married to a second wife, who was many years younger than himself. Macann owned a small farm, had comfort about his cabin, and had a very fine stock of cattle, which rendered him quite independent in his circumstances.

Mr. Ring was a white man, married to a Choctaw wife; they lived about four miles from the mission, on the Fort Smith road. Mr. Ring had an excellent farm, in the edge of an extensive canebrake, well cultivated by negro servants, who were kept under his personal supervision. Mrs. Ring, although an Indian, was sensible, tolerably well educated, energetic in business, and altogether a superior woman.

There was quite a community of Indian families around the Choctaw Agency, which was five miles distant from Fort Coffee.

Major William Armstrong was the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the south-west, and the Agent for the Choctaw tribe. He was a Tennessean, a personal friend of President Polk, and a brother of the Hon. R. Armstrong, who served as Consul at Liverpool, during Mr. Polk's administration. Mr. Armstrong was a man of unblemished reputation, of excellent morals, and formerly had been a communicant of the Presbyterian Church. His family consisted of himself, two sons, a little daughter, Mr. Irwin, his clerk, and Mr. Wilson, the school-teacher. He had a son and daughter at college in the east. Mrs. Armstrong had died in Tennessee; the housekeepers were colored servants. Mr. Armstrong was a genuine and true friend of the Indians, and labored indefatigably to improve their condition in all respects. He gave his cordial approbation to all well-directed efforts to establish missions and schools in the several tribes under his superintendence.

Mr. Wilson, the teacher, was a graduate of the Washington College, Pennsylvania; he was appointed Principal of Spencer Academy, where he served some time, after which he received the appointment of Agent for the Choctaws.

Such were our neighbors when we commenced our labors at Fort Coffee. They were kind, sociable, well-disposed, and pleasant in their intercourse with us, but they were not pious. The few whites were moral, intelligent, and interesting; they were sincerely desirous that we should be successful in our labors for the improvement and civilization of the native people.

CHAPTER XIV.

DISTINGUISHED MEN.

THE Honorable Nat Folsom was our district chief, a full-blooded Indian, uneducated, and able to converse but little in the English language. His residence was in the vicinity of Pheasant Bluffs, thirty miles from our mission.

When I first saw him he was probably fifty years of age, large and well-developed; and, though considerably gray, he was still active and in the enjoyment of vigorous health. He was an unusually fine-looking Indian; and, although his glossy hair was becoming streaked with white, his face was smooth, his eye bright, and his step elastic and firm.

We met him first at a camp meeting, which was held in his own neighborhood. He was plainly dressed for one of the rulers of a nation. He wore cloth pants, calico shirt, coarse brogans, linen hunting shirt, and was without a vest or cravat. He wore a bandana handkerchief tied around his head as a turban, and a red sash around his body. Under his belt he carried his tomahawk, which was an ingenious and novel instrument. Its blade was well polished and sharp; its poll was made to serve as the bowl of a tobacco pipe; there was an aperture through the handle communicating with the poll, to convey the smoke from the pipe to the mouth; and the end of the handle was tapered down to the proper size, and mounted with a silver mouth-piece.

Folsom was a dignified and sensible man, of good character, and possessing considerable property; but being destitute of education, he was incompetent to fill the office of chief with honor to himself or advantage to the nation. We could readily account for his promotion; there were no full-blooded Indians in the district who were educated, and half-breeds were not in favor with the masses of the people. Though shrewd and intelligent, they were regarded with suspicion. The unadulterated Choctaw blood was thought to be purest and best; and hence full-bloods were considered the most true, patriotic, and reliable.

William Riddle, the United States Interpreter, was a prominent man. He was a half-breed, tolerably well-educated, intelligent, and of excellent character; he resided on a farm near the Agency, had a wife and three or four children, and lived comfortably in a hewed log-house, with shingled roof and stone chimney, and tastefully and conveniently furnished. Mr. Riddle was about thirty years of age, tall and well-formed, and gentlemanly in his bearing; and, though intelligent and capable, he was exceedingly modest and unassuming. His habits were correct, and altogether he was an excellent citizen, and, unquestionably, the best man in the Moshulatubbee district for the office of chief.

Colonel Thomson M'Kenny was a prominent citizen, an intelligent, educated, and shrewd half-breed. He was about thirty years of age, a small, active, and sprightly man, who always had "an eye to the main chance." He was quite a politician, but, unfortunately, not appreciated by his fellow-citizens, and, hence, not called to fill responsible positions. He served as a trustee for the several academies of the nation, and was well qualified for the duties of the office; he manifested a lively interest in behalf of education, and frequently visited the schools and exerted himself in their behalf; his social and conversational qualifications were of a high order.

The Honorable J. Fletcher was the chief of the *Puckshenubbee district.* He was a full-blood, a man of fair character, true to his people, patriotic, and earnest in his efforts for the advancement of his tribe in civilization and education. Fletcher was not educated, and, in point of talent and qualifications, was a second-rate man.

Colonel Peter P. Pitchlynn was the school trustee chosen from that district. He was almost a white man, having just enough Indian blood to give him citizenship and privileges in the tribe. He was educated and intelligent; he had traveled extensively and observed men and things closely; his qualifications were such as would secure to him position and prominence in any community. He was quite wealthy, and in point of talent and information second to none in the tribe; and, though patriotic and willing to fill the highest office of the nation, his services were not required. He was a broken-down politician, at least he was so regarded by the sovereigns; he was too much of a white man to be intrusted with power; they could not vote for a man who had a fair complexion and blue eyes.

The Honorable Peter Folsom was the chief of the *Pushmataha district*. He was a stout man, in the meridian of life, about five feet and eight inches in hight, with a bright complexion for a full-blood Indian. He was a dignified man, evidently regarding himself as a ruler of the people, and not unwilling to receive the attention and homage which are due to one who has been promoted by the people to a post of influence and power. Folsom's reputation was good; he was a man of wealth and character, but uneducated. He was the most aristocratic *lord* I saw in the Choctaw tribe, and the most ostentatious in all respects. He made a visit across the territory to the Agency, bringing his family; he had an elegant barouche in which his family traveled; a black coachman sat out in front and a well-dressed servant sat in the boot, while the lady within had one or two maids to give her attention; the old chief rode in front upon the back of a splendid saddle-horse. Folsom was a friend to the schools, and did not fail to use his influence, personal and official, to advance the interests of his people and to promote their prosperity in all things. He was a true and patriotic man.

Colonel S. Jones was the trustee chosen from the

Pushmataha district. He was an educated half-breed, and a man of energy and business qualifications of a superior character; he was a merchant, connected with a firm that did an extensive business. His wealth and intelligence gave him influence with the most intelligent portion of his people, but not with the uneducated masses. Jones had a fair reputation; he was an ardent advocate and friend of education.

Having noticed the men of position and influence, it will be remarked that while the chiefs were all illiterate and full-blooded Indians, the United States Interpreter and the trustees of the schools were all educated half-breeds.

In passing through different tribes the traveler is surprised to find so many *titular dignitaries.* Captains and colonels abounded in the Choctaw tribe, but there seemed to be no majors or generals; the same was true of all the border Indians, so far as we could learn. I never could ascertain precisely what the title indicated or the steps that were necessary to secure titular honors. With the Choctaws the sheriffs, or "light-horsemen," as they were styled, were all captains, while the *chiefs* and *ex-chiefs* were all colonels; and perhaps others were permitted to assume such titles.

With the wild tribes titles of honor were conferred for any remarkable feats performed, and especially for daring prowess in conflict with their enemies. An incident will serve as an illustration in point.

An old Camanche was in company with a number of white men, at Fort Smith, and heard a gentleman address an officer of the army as "captain." The Camanche turned to the officer with an expression of astonishment: "What, you capitan? What you do make men call you *capitan?* *Me* steal heap hosses; my people call me *capitan!* You much brave, like Camanche; steal hosses heap!" But I would not intimate that our Choctaw captains and colonels so won their honors and received their titles; they were honorably promoted without doubt.

CHAPTER XV.

FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION.

ON Tuesday morning, at sunrise, Mr. Heald, merchant, Mr. Cotton, our head carpenter, and myself started to Fort Smith to participate in the anniversary celebration of our national independence. Two of us were well mounted on mustang horses, and the third upon a Santa Fé mule. The distance was fifteen miles, down the river, through heavy timber which shaded the road, rendering our equestrian exercise delightful.

Mr. Heald and myself had been chosen to address the people on the occasion. The church in which we spoke was much too small to contain the audience. At the door of the church Captain Hoffman, of the United States army, as marshal, formed the procession, and conducted us to a beautiful grove, where a bountiful dinner had been prepared by the citizens. While we sat at the well-furnished table, the head of which was honored by the presence of General ZACHARY TAYLOR, the military band gave us most excellent music. There were no intoxicating drinks upon the table; perfect order and decorum were preserved; not an event transpired to mar or lessen the pleasures of the occasion, and so our national festivities passed off most delightfully.

At three o'clock in the afternoon we mounted our horses to return to Fort Coffee. In crossing the Poteau river, in a ferry-boat, we fell in with the mail-carrier, who made weekly tours through the border tribes on horseback. Mr. Heald was in the habit of acting as an assistant or deputy postmaster at the Agency, and, having the key in his pocket, kindly consented to open the mail-bags and ascertain if there were any papers or letters for Mr. Cotton or myself. During the examination he related some amusing incidents relating to and illustrative of the method of transacting business by officers on the frontiers. The usual method was for the officer to label the crown of his hat with the word "*office*," and then, carrying his papers with him, he was always found *in his office*, and ready to transact business in a legal manner, by the roadside, on the bank of the river, with his fishing-rod, or in a bear-chase in the forest. It was a very excellent interpretation of the statute, and enabled officers to comply with the requirements of the statute without making any great sacrifice.

Leaving the Poteau we entered a dense canebrake, which extended for many miles. To one who has never gazed upon a forest of reeds language will scarcely convey a correct idea of what a canebrake is, and that one especially. In that deep alluvial deposit of sand and rich loam, which was nothing less than an immense *hot-bed*, the canes were almost equal, in the luxuriance of their growth, to the bamboos which flourish in the tropical climates, and of which the natives of Central America build their hovels. The canes stood so thick there seemed to be little room for other timber; there were a few cottonwoods, elms, and pecans.

We arrived at home, in the twilight of the evening, greatly to the relief and joy of the family, who had begun to tremble at the thought of spending the night alone; for, though we apprehended no danger in the midst of an Indian population, yet the females were timid, especially at night; and our German cook had even less fortitude than the women.

On Saturday, the eighth day of July, Mr. May, one of the carpenters, signified his intention of leaving us, and demanded the amount due him for his labor. The treasury was empty, or nearly so; Mr. Goode had left no money on hand, but there was an order upon the Choctaw Agent for money, but the time had not yet arrived for presenting the order. But, having no private funds with which to do business, I took the Superintendent's order and rode over to explain the matter to the Agent, and to ask for a small advance to relieve us from our embarrassments. The Major listened politely, and then replied that he was only authorized to pay certain amounts of money semi-annually and at the dates specified in the law. He then significantly intimated that it was our duty to live within our income, and, as the money was not yet due for two full weeks, he could not then pay it.

Riding home again I made a rigid examination into the financial condition of a friend, and thus succeeded in borrowing a sufficient sum to meet the demand. Then, on *the* day that the money was due to the Academy, the order was presented to the Agent and the installment was paid over. We had considered Major Armstrong rather wanting in the spirit of accommodation when he declined paying us a few dollars in advance, but we have since concluded that he only did his duty in the premises.

The time had come when our crop of corn and vegetables required no more work, so that we were able to reduce the expenses. We were gratified to be able to dismiss Sam, the plowman, and to be rid of his presence. He worked faithfully, but was an artful, sly man, who was destitute of moral principle. He had built a small skiff, in which he crossed the river to spend every Sunday at the house of a Cherokee woman, who had a grown-up daughter. During the week he would sometimes go over and spend the evening. We were well satisfied that his intentions were not honorable, but, as we had no proof of his guilt or efforts at intrigue, we bore with him till it was convenient to dispense with his services.

We had employed Mr. R., a brick-mason and plasterer, by the day, to repair the old buildings, but he progressed so slowly that I became convinced that his purpose was to make a lengthy and profitable business of it; and to hasten the work and to secure a reasonable amount of labor for the compensation given, I set an active and willing mason to assist in the repairs; but Mr. R., finding himself caught, became very indignant, and quit in disgust, but greatly to our relief.

The new dwelling-house progressed rather slowly; it could not be otherwise, as the framing-timbers were cut and hewed in the forest. A large oak was felled and worked up into shingles for the roof. The carpenters dressed all the lumber by hand, and made the doors and window-sash for the entire establishment. There was no machinery for dressing lumber in the country, and no dressed lumber, or work done by machinery, in market.

On Monday, the sixteenth of July, I concluded to amuse myself for an hour at fishing. Years had passed since I had cast a baited hook into the river, or had made any such attempt at amusement. Having procured a cane rod, twenty feet in length, with a stout cord, and a hook as large as the tine of a table-fork, I went down to the river, and, baiting the hook with an ounce of fresh beef, cast it out into the deep and turbid stream. In a few minutes I realised that thrilling and exquisitely-delightful sensation, which is known only to fishermen, resulting from a "bite." It was not a "nibble," with which a mere tyro might become exultant, but a veritable *bite*, which took hold and fastened upon the hook. To lift the fish out of the water at the end of the rod was impossible: hence the only plan which promised success was to give him a slack line, and let him run back and forth till his strength was exhausted, and then drag him out upon the sand-bar. He proved to be a white catfish, and weighed twelve pounds and eight ounces, which was considered rather small for a fish of that species; they sometimes exceed one hundred pounds in weight.

A gentleman related to us a circumstance which is worthy of record, and, though it is a *fish story*, he assured us that it was truthful. Near the mouth of the Canadian river, about forty miles above Fort Coffee, a number of Indian lads were in the water bathing, when an enormous catfish seized a child six years of age and instantly carried him to the bottom. The boys were greatly excited, but could extend no aid to the perishing child. The friends assembled, and, with the aid of a fishing-seine, succeeded in dragging both fish and child to the shore. The fish had taken the child's head entire within its jaws, but could proceed no further, and thus both had perished. The circumstance would seem almost incredible, yet it was so well authenticated that we could not question its truthfulness.

CHAPTER XVI.

PROVISIONS DAMAGED.

LATE in the month of July we discovered that our flour, like the surplus manna in the wilderness, bred worms. It was, indeed, a difficult matter to preserve provisions in a sweet and sound condition during the long, dry, and intensely-warm summer seasons in that country. We had known that the weevils would consume the unground grain that might be stored away in the granary, but we had never heard that the meal and flour would become foul and unfit for use. Our flour was in barrels, had been purchased in Cincinnati in the month of April preceding, and was of excellent quality.

On opening a fresh barrel, one morning, it was found to contain myriads of white, hairy worms from a fourth to a half inch long. The cook stood aghast; he was, indeed, so much excited as to attract the attention of the entire family to the scene and the cause of his amazement. "Mishter B., O, mishter B., te flour ish spilt; te flour ish no goot; it 's filt mit so many verms as eber vas!"

"'Gustus" was not very courageous; he was constitutionally cautious and somewhat nervous. On a former occasion we had seen him overwhelmed with fear and uncontrollable excitement; but he was quite sure the circumstances fully justified him in his agitation and expressions of alarm. He had gone into the garden to gather vegetables for dinner, when his hand came into close proximity to a little garter-snake, about eighteen inches in length. When he saw it he dropped the basket and run, with all possible speed, calling out lustily for help. "Mishter B., a shnake! a shnake! She run't at me so fasht as eber she coot, mit her mout vide open; unt ven I fling a shtick at her, shtill she coomed mit her toong out so far as eber vas!" It was no laughing matter with 'Gustus, who trembled from head to foot, and such was his alarm that it was a full week before he would again venture inside the garden-gate. He became almost angry with us because we manifested so little sympathy for him in his imminent peril and his hairbreadth escape.

With regard to the flour, however, and his recent agitation our sympathy was deep and genuine. Spreading sheets upon the ground we opened all the barrels, and run the flour through a meal sieve to separate the worms from it. We then let the flour remain in the sun about six hours, so that any small worms which had gone through the sieve might have an opportunity to creep out; we then barreled it up again. This was all that we could do, and yet it failed to give entire satisfaction. After that refining process had been completed our family had but little relish for wheat-bread or pastry, but all became very partial to corn-cake and *tom-ful-la*. After a consultation we determined to sell the flour for whatever price it would command, not failing to make known its true condition to the purchaser.

Our Cherokee neighbor, who kept the ferry, was eager to purchase our entire stock, but could not give quite as much as we demanded for it. Knowing his inveterate propensity to chaffer about prices, without reason or justice, we let him know, in positive terms, that he could not have a single barrel for one cent less than the price asked. His next maneuver was to purchase partly on time, but with the purpose never to pay; but failing in that he agreed to take it at the price and pay down, but in counting his money he lacked just fifty cents of having the amount. He commenced to chaffer and higgle for the half dollar; and when he found that he was not likely to succeed, he was greatly displeased and said he would not take the flour, and so left us in disgust. But in a few minutes he returned, in excellent temper, and cheerfully paid the full price, and relieved us of what we chose to spare.

The ferryman and myself had become so well acquainted in that business transaction, that we perfectly understood each other ever afterward.

INCIDENT.

A destitute colored woman came to the mission one afternoon in a famishing condition. Her name was Hannah. She was the old worn-out slave belonging to our neighbor Jones. In appearance she was by far the most aged, withered, decrepit, forlorn, and pitiable creature we ever saw. Her limbs were drawn almost out of joint by age and excessive hardships; so that she could not walk erect, but was forced to creep along upon her hands and feet like an infant. Aided by two sticks she could stand and hobble along for a few rods till exhausted, when she would again creep and drag herself upon the ground. It thus required her utmost speed and strength to travel from her cabin to the mission in three hours, a distance of less than one mile. I inquired as to her age and history. "Aunt Hannah, how old are you?" "How ole is I—dunno—no tell massa dat! I'se dreffal ole, dat's sartin. Da cotch me when I'se a gal, way in de ole country, and toted me to Massysippy desput long spell ago. 'Spect dis here ole body's live more'n a hundred year—now I'se 'bout to perish! I'se no chil'en to keer for dis ole mammy. Ole massa berry good man, monsous kind to all our folks; but he die, an missus, right off, sell ole man and all de chil'en all down de ribber, to work cotton fiel, and sell dis ole body to Injuns. Nobber see my ole man an chil'en no more in dis heah worl, dat's shoah! Now, I wants few ear ob corn, make *tom-ful-la*. Youse 'ligious folks and won't let poor nigga perish!"

As Hannah was too old and frail to labor, Jones had concluded not to furnish her any more provisions. As she was not useful to any one, he thought it would be strictly proper, and in good taste, for her to die as soon as convenient.

Mrs. Hall, an excellent half-breed Indian woman, who was in good circumstances, and the owner of a number of colored people, kindly consented to receive Hannah into a vacant cabin, and take care of her as long as she lived. Her own servants could nurse the feeble old slave while she lived. Mrs. H. did this cheerfully, from a conviction of duty, and without any compensation whatever. Hannah was still living when we left that country, and quite comfortable.

MASSARD PRAIRIE.

On the twenty-second day of July Mr. Cotton and myself went to assist Rev. John Cowle in holding a two-days' meeting in the Massard Prairie, just east of the line between the state and the territory. We preached in an old vacated cabin, which was pleasantly shaded by forest-trees. The congregations varied in number from sixty to one hundred, which was remarkably good for that sparsely-settled region of country. The people gave serious attention to the word, and occasionally wept in time of preaching. In the evening of the second day there was a manifestation of deep feeling and true penitence in the congregation. Many wept aloud, and besought God to have mercy on them. A number came to the altar for prayer; and at the close of the service eight united with the Church on probation, the most of whom professed conversion. There was one rather remarkable case, which is perhaps worthy of record. A man who had passed the meridian of life came forward and bowed at the altar. He wept and prayed, manifesting deep and pungent conviction for sins. He confessed his guilt and vileness, and poured out his soul in an agony of prayer. He professed faith in the Savior, and seemed to be filled with joy unutterable. "Ah," said he, "I feel as humble as a dog! I have been a vile sinner deserving hell, but have obtained mercy through Christ!" He had once resided in Texas, and in an altercation with a neighbor had taken the life of his enemy. He had fled from Texas to Arkansas to avoid a prosecution or assassination. And there, in the wilderness, he humbled himself before the mercy-seat and sought the Savior; and who dare question the willingness of Christ, or the power of the Gospel to save even him whose hands were reeking with human gore? Of M.'s sincerity and earnestness we entertained not a single doubt; but whether or not he would persevere and continue faithful to the end, none but God could know.

At the close of the last service a class was organized, and henceforth Massard Prairie became a regular preaching-place in the Fort Smith circuit. During the two days spent at Massard Mr. C. and myself were most kindly entertained at the house of Mr. H. M., who was a remarkable and somewhat enigmatical character. He was a farmer, a merchant, and a speculator. He dealt in dry goods, in groceries, in liquors, and in negroes, and did a thriving business. He was as shrewd as a Yankee peddler, had always "an eye to the main chance," and would not scruple to overreach his best friends, or even his own brother, in a bargain. And yet he was not covetous or penurious, but was kind, charitable, hospitable, and liberal to a fault. He was courteous and respectful to religious people, especially ministers of the Gospel, whom he would invariably ask to conduct worship in his family. He was a true friend to the "parson," would feed and clothe him, and, if need be, give him money, and send him on his way rejoicing. Mr. M. was not eccentric, and did not affect a character, but was honest, candid, high-minded, and honorable. A minister who had received numerous evidences of kindness at his hand, presented him with an elegant family Bible, as a token of his friendship and esteem; but before a month had elapsed the Bible was in the market and sold to a neighbor. Mr. M. was utterly incapable of doing what he conceived to be a mean or unworthy act; he was, in short, the best style of men reared and educated in that remarkable and unique quarter of the globe.

After enjoying the hospitalities, and studying the character of our kind host for two days, we took leave of the family, not failing to "remember the *boy*" who had cared for our mustangs in the mean time. Returning to Fort Coffee I employed Muncrieff, a Choctaw, to make us ten tuns of marsh hay.

CHAPTER XVII.

INDIAN CAMP MEETING.

On Friday morning, the eleventh day of August, Rev. John Cowle and myself started to Pheasant Bluffs to attend a camp meeting. Before leaving Fort Coffee we had made the needful provision for our comfort, each being furnished with a blanket, a rope with which to hobble or tether his horse, a package of bread and cheese, a box of matches, and a tin drinking-vessel. The distance was thirty miles, and, as neither of us had ever been there, we knew nothing of the trail, and but little of the character of the country over which we must travel to reach the place of our destination. Having proceeded a few miles we began to feel a little anxious to obtain information that would guide us in the proper direction, and so we halted at the door of a cabin to inquire the way to Pheasant Bluffs. The *major domo* replied, in a very deliberate and dignified manner, "Me no talk Inglis;" and, as he declined saying another word, we were forced to proceed on our journey at random. We soon found a gentleman, however, with whom we could communicate. His smattering of English, and ours of Choctaw, enabled us to converse quite intelligibly. There was no road, as we learned, but a multitude of paths, crossing and recrossing, and forming a beautiful variety of curves and angles. He gave us one distinct general direction, which was given in a style worthy of a son of the forest. "Yes, me know; me tell you good. You make hosses gallop on trail heap, far, where sun goes down. Trail much easy; San Bois water plenty much; ponies heap grass eat." With such satisfactory and definite information we prosecuted our journey, not forgetting that we were to travel in the direction of "where the sun goes down."

We were traveling over a poor and barren region of country; the soil was light and gravelly, and the timber was stunted and gnarled. There was every species of oak, an occasional hickory, a persimmon, and the *bois d'arc*, or osage orange; the latter was of a large growth, covered with its spikes or thorns, and bearing its apple, which resembles the orange; but the fruit is entirely worthless, not being eaten even by hogs. It is quite large, and matures its seed in the center of the orange like an apple.

We saw but few cabins or people, and no indications of comfort or thrift, till we arrived at the San Bois creek. It was a small stream of pure cold water, having its source in the adjacent mountain. On either side of the creek there was a belt of fertile bottom lands, which the natives had not failed to occupy for agricultural purposes. The soil being rich, the water pure and cold, and the grass excellent, the location was indeed very desirable.

As it was twelve o'clock we determined to halt, rest, and seek refreshment for ourselves and horses. The morning had been hot and sultry, and we had not been able to procure any water on the route. Unsaddling our horses we staked them out to grass, after which we went to a neighboring cabin to procure either melons or green corn as a dessert for dinner, but were disappointed, not being able to procure any thing whatever. After eating our crackers and cheese, and quenching our thirst from the waters of the San Bois, we spread our blankets in the shade of a tree and lay down and slept for an hour, after which we resumed our journey with our faces in the direction of "sundown."

Late in the afternoon we arrived at the camp-ground, which was one mile from the Arkansas, just below the mouth of the Canadian river, and near to the residence of the Honorable Nat Folsom, our district chief. The site was well chosen; an excellent spring of pure cold water flowed out of the hill-side, furnishing an ample supply for all needful purposes. An old vacated house served for a preachers' tent, also as a room in which to store the supplies of provisions for the meeting. A porch in front of the house served as a pulpit, also as an altar; and an arbor was soon constructed in front of the porch, which, when seated, accommodated the entire congregation in time of service.

There was an old field, the fence of which was rotten and gone, that was grown up with a rank growth of grass; we hobbled our horses and turned them out to graze upon the rich herbage, where they flourished during the continuance of the meeting.

The people were coming in, and all were very busily employed in getting all things in readiness. The services had not commenced, but preparations were going on. The people were preparing to encamp upon the ground, though no tents were made. Rev. John C. Parker, the presiding elder, and Rev. J. M. Steele were already on the ground, and ready to commence their labors.

The first sermon was preached in the evening, from the words of the prophet, "O Lord, I heard thy speech, and was afraid; O Lord, revive thy work!" The sermon was followed by a prayer meeting, in which there was much earnest and importunate supplication that the blessing of God might descend and rest upon the people. We felt most deeply our imbecility, destitution, and utter incompetency to accomplish any good unless God should deign to be present and to own his own message of Gospel truth.

The people were just emerging from a state of barbarism, and, hence, ignorant of God, of truth, and of personal accountability for the deeds done in this life. O, how difficult it is to preach clearly and profitably to such a people! On Saturday the people came in from all directions. There were Choctaws, Chickasaws, Cherokees, and Creeks, together with quite a number of colored servants; there were no whites upon the ground except the ministers and three or four men who were married to Indian wives.

The most of Saturday was spent in preaching and prayer meetings, but with no visible effect till the evening service had commenced. At the close of the sermon penitents were invited forward for prayers, when about a score immediately bowed at the benches, some of whom wept most bitterly, and all were apparently sincere and earnest. The congregation was attentive and respectful, the interest and the solemnity being such that no one even presumed to smoke his pipe, although the act would not have been considered a breach of order or decorum in such an assembly, and especially in the open air in the grove. It is thought that an Indian with the pipe in his mouth is better prepared to listen and can better analyze an argument. When they are able to understand a discourse they are very attentive listeners, never seem indifferent, and do not leave till the remarks are concluded. At the close of a sermon or "talk" they will give an audible response, or expression of approval, "*It is well.*" It was about equivalent to *amen*, and the custom was universal among the tribes.

On Sunday the chief was present, clean and neat, but very plain as to the quality and style of his apparel. He was attentive and respectful, but not seriously impressed with religious truth. As he moved about the encampment, and mingled with the people, it was evident that he remembered the relation he sustained to them; he was a ruler of the people, a lordly sachem of his tribe.

The services progressed with increasing interest. In the afternoon penitents were again invited to the altar, when almost half the congregation came forward, some of whom were crying aloud for mercy. The aged mother, whose head was hoary with the frosts of seventy winters, was seen kneeling at the same bench with her children and grandchildren, while all were alike pleading for mercy and pardon through the merit of the blessed Savior. Manifestations of deeper penitence, stronger emotions, or more intense agony of spirit in prayer I do not remember ever to have witnessed on a similar occasion. One young woman became so much excited, and wept so bitterly, that her friends carried her out of the congregation. At that stage of the meeting an intelligent Choctaw woman became incensed at the preacher, accused him of making an effort to frighten the people, and ordered him to cease his talk and sit down; but he was not disconcerted in the least, requested her to be composed and patiently hear the Gospel preached.

It was impossible to ascertain the number of conversions, or to know to what extent their conceptions of saving truth were intelligible and Scriptural. That God's Spirit operated on their hearts, producing deep and pungent convictions, we could not question; and we rejoiced to witness the deep solemnity which pervaded the entire congregation on every occasion of worship. The colored people, at different times, met alone and held prayer meetings, and, judging from their zeal and earnestness in singing and praying, they had excellent meetings.

Our accommodations during the progress of the meeting were not luxurious, but plain and substantial. There had been no great temptation to an excessive indulgence of the appetite; the food, however, was abundant and healthful, consisting principally of boiled beef and yams, corn-bread, coffee, and the never-failing *tom-ful-la.* It was all prepared by the Indian women, or their colored servants, and served out in bountiful quantities and in a style of primitive simplicity. There were no roast fowls, pastry, or preserved fruits upon the tables; but, in default of rich desserts, we were blessed with vigorous appetites, ate heartily, and returned unfeigned thanks to our gracious Father, who had been pleased to supply our real wants.

On Monday morning we were assembled to hold the closing service of the camp meeting. The invitation being given, twenty-two united with the Church on probation, and twenty-one received baptism, a few of whom were infant children. Late in the morning the benediction was pronounced. We ate a hasty lunch and prepared to disperse to our several homes.

We gathered in our ponies from the woods, exchanged adieus, and, mounting our animals, set out upon our journey. The sun was high in the heavens, and poured his scorching beams upon the thirsty earth; the atmosphere was heated and sultry, and there was scarcely a breath of air to disturb the foliage of the trees as we retraced our trail homeward. Reaching the mission by nightfall we were grateful to find our families in health, and the work progressing under the direction of our faithful carpenter.

On the following Saturday we commenced to hold a meeting at *New Hope*. The ministers in attendance were J. M. Steele, L. C. Adams, and H. C. Benson. The congregations were good; the entire community manifested considerable interest in the services, and God's blessing rested upon the labors of his servants. On Sunday afternoon we organized a society of fifteen members, all on probation, a majority of them having professed conversion at the recent camp meeting at Pheasant Bluffs. All were Indians and colored people, except two white men who were married to Chickasaw women.

On Sunday we closed the services of the meeting, our hearts swelling with emotions of gratitude that God had deigned to own and crown with his blessing our labors in his vineyard. This was the first success of the Gospel in the north of the Choctaw nation; it was the first Church organization ever effected in the Moshulatubbee district. We were led to regard it as the "first-fruits" of an abundant harvest that should certainly be gathered into the garner of the Lord. We could but consider it an earnest of success in the great work of evangelizing that district, and of planting Christianity in that region of darkness. The first trophy of the cross in a heathen land marks an epoch in the history of missionary labor for that field, and the first conversions in any community, where no Church has hitherto been founded, is an occasion of exceeding joy to the pioneer in the Gospel ministry.

ROMANCE.

Late one evening we had a call from two Chickasaw women, who resided near the Agency. They were sisters; one of them was married and the other was a bouncing widow, about twenty-four years of age. The widow had been engaged to be married to a young white man, whose name was Isaac M.; but even there the truth of the old proverb was verified, "the current of true love never runs smooth." There had been a "lover's quarrel," and the young man, becoming offended, declared the engagement at an end. He had left, assuring his dusky betrothed that on the following day he would go aboard the steam packet, and return to his friends in Mississippi. As he had not returned to seek a reconciliation the bride expectant had become somewhat anxious, and had come to ascertain whether M. had been at Fort Coffee and had gone on the boat. But he had not carried his threat into execution, and on the following Sunday Mrs. W. and Mr. M. stood before the altar of Hymen and entered into matrimonial vows.

CHAPTER XVIII.

VISIT TO FORT SMITH.

On Saturday, in company with a friend, I started to Fort Smith to spend the Sabbath, and to conduct religious services in the absence of the stationed minister. We spent the night at the residence of Mr. A., who had formerly resided in the city of Pittsburg, extensively engaged in mercantile pursuits. He was an intelligent and gentlemanly old man, who had been accustomed to mingle with the wealthy and refined; but, having met with reverses of fortune, he had been greatly reduced in his circumstances, and had emigrated to the frontier settlements with the hope of being able to improve his financial condition. The family consisted of Mr. A. and wife, and three grown-up daughters, who were educated, accomplished, and fully qualified to mingle in the most refined and polished society. The dwelling consisted of two small cabins, built of round poles, and covered with *shakes*. The floors were of loose, rough boards, and bare, while the scanty supply of furniture was of the cheapest and plainest description; and yet the family were cheerful, hopeful, and happy, not entertaining a single doubt that a brighter day would soon dawn upon them, and their lost fortunes would be retrieved.

There was but one church edifice at Fort Smith, which was in an unfinished condition; it was built by the community, and occupied by ministers of the various denominations. At that time the standard of morality was deplorably low. The religious influence was scarcely perceptible, yet there were a few faithful and consistent Christians.

The most active, devoted, and zealous disciple of the Savior was Mr. J. B., who was a Congregationalist, a dry-goods merchant, and formerly of the city of Boston. He had the reputation of a good *master*, which was not contradicted by the appearance of his slaves; they were fat and sleek, cheerful, well-dressed, and apparently quite happy.

On Sunday morning it was my privilege to preach the word to about one hundred persons, who were convened in the sanctuary for divine worship. The congregation was unique, embracing the greatest variety of character, and the extremes, so far as position and intelligence were concerned.

General Taylor, afterward President of the United States, Majors Hoffman and Hunter, with a full corps of captains, lieutenants, ensigns, sergeants, and corporals of the United States army, were present; then there were merchants, mechanics, professional men, and day laborers making up the assembly.

General Taylor and family occupied a plain, neat dwelling, half a mile south of the officers' quarters, where he occupied his leisure time in the cultivation of a garden. The General was said to excel in horticulture, not failing to have the earliest and best vegetables in the market. His habits were scrupulously correct and his private character irreproachable. When the crisis had arrived, and war with Mexico became inevitable, General Taylor was removed from the South-Western and placed in command of the Southern Division of the United States army.

In passing along the streets we saw scores and hundreds of Indians of the various tribes of the border, but the most of them were Choctaws and Cherokees. Many of them were intoxicated, and more than a score might be seen lying in the shade of the buildings and fences helplessly drunk. At Fort Smith and Van Buren alone over three thousand barrels of whisky were annually sold to the natives in violation of law. It was, indeed, humiliating to know that men, educated in a Christian land, could sink themselves so low in the scale of morals and virtue as to consent to engage in the liquor traffic, and pander to the vicious appetites of a destitute and degraded people, who were utterly incapable of self-control! The man who does it commits murder without any extenuating circumstances. Were he to take a Colt's revolver and shoot down the besotted Indians by scores, his hands would not more certainly reek with human gore, and his soul would not more surely be steeped in guilt, than they now are by that foul traffic.

The natives hanging about the shops and stores were considered inoffensive; occasionally, however, they would yield to temptation and purloin a much-coveted article. An instance of theft had just occurred which was rather amusing in its termination. A merchant went into a back room of his store for a moment, and, returning, missed a bolt of calico, which he had placed upon the counter. He examined the shelves and searched the counters to find it, but without success. Stepping into the street he looked in all directions, but could not discover any thing of the thief or the lost goods. When about to return to the store-room he heard a cry of distress, and saw an Indian in the middle of the Arkansas, apparently drowning. A skiff was immediately sent to the rescue, and the unfortunate native was brought to the shore. It proved to be a Cherokee woman and the thief who had stolen the calico. She had taken the goods, and, concealing herself under the high bank of the river, had wound the entire bolt of calico around her waist, and then had plunged into the stream to swim to the opposite shore, a feat which she could easily have accomplished under ordinary circumstances; but, when the goods had become thoroughly saturated with water, the weight overcame her strength, and caused her to sink to the bottom of the river. While the merchant rejoiced in regaining his lost goods, the poor woman was forced to depart with the sad reflection that she had no rich and gaudy prints with which to adorn her person and render her comely in the eyes of her forest lord.

Having an appointment for preaching at Massard, on our return, it was necessary for us to leave Fort Smith shortly after the conclusion of the morning services. A pleasant ride of an hour and a half, through a level, open country, brought us to the cabin where religious worship was to be conducted. Having preached to the little congregation the benediction was pronounced, and we prepared to resume our journey to the mission. As the distance was only twelve miles we hoped that we should be able to travel it before sunset; but when we came to the Poteau river it was overflowing its banks, and there was no ferry-boat at hand to carry us over. Whence had come the flood? There had been no rain, and not a cloud was to be seen in the heavens above. On the preceding day we could have walked over the bed of the stream upon the rocks without wetting the soles of our boots; and within the lapse of thirty hours the river had become impassable, and the torrent was now rushing up the channel toward its source as if the laws of gravitation had been reversed! But the solution of the mystery was easy; there had been heavy rains in the mountains a thousand miles west, where the Arkansas has its sources, and the immense quantities of snow had been melting, and a mighty volume of water was pouring down its channel, causing it to rise from ten to twenty feet in as many hours. From its full and overflowing banks a torrent had rushed up the empty bed of the Poteau river, causing it to deluge the low lands adjacent.

Finding the river impassable we knew not how to proceed; for it was almost night, and in a few minutes the sun would be below the horizon. Having no blankets we were not prepared to encamp for the night; nor was it by any means desirable, for there was one lady in the company, who did not relish the prospect of contending with an innumerable army of musketoes till the dawn of the morning; the bare thought was horrible!

There was an excellent ferry-boat, but it was at the bottom of the river, having been chained to a stake at low water. Hallooing to "uncle Phil," the colored ferryman, who lived near by, on the hill-side, we besought him to come to our relief. We would cheerfully consent to bribe him, in despite of the elements, to land us safely on the opposite shore. But Phil was powerless; he manifested a soothing sympathy for us in our extremity, but could do nothing more.

"You 'se got desput bad luck," said Phil; "'spect can't do nuffin to help gemmen an' lady ober dis here night! Bery sor', bery sor', massa, 'deed I is; but dunno what we 's able to do! De ribber 's monsous full an' still risin'; de boat 's in de bottom; can't liff him up no how, dat 's sartin. I 'lows gemmen an' lady neber place der foot on tudder shoah dis here night!"

We persisted in stating that we *must* cross over on some terms; it was absolutely necessary. "Uncle Phil, have you not a skiff or canoe in which you can carry us over?"

"Yes, massa," said Phil, "we 'se got an ole bongoe, but he 's 'strornary small an' chock full ob water! I 'lows massa 's not gwine to tote dese here hosses 'cross de ribber in dis here ole canoe!"

"No, uncle, we shall not attempt to carry the horses, but we can carry ourselves and saddles in it, and let the ponies swim by the side of the boat."

Light now began to dawn upon the old ferryman's dormant intellect; and he grasped the thought that it might be possible for us to reach the desired shore, without waiting a week for the stream to become fordable. He went to work and in a few minutes had the water all bailed out, and in less than half an hour we were securely landed on the homeward side of the river. We compensated the ferryman, resaddled our mustangs, and were ready to resume our journey; but it was now dark, and our trail through the low bottom lands was indistinct. The light of the stars which struggled through the dark foliage of the trees was insufficient to give certainty to our steps. Slowly and cautiously we pursued our way till we reached the dwelling of Mr. Ring, just upon the margin of an extensive canebrake. As we were still five miles from home, we concluded to accept Mrs. Ring's kind invitation to remain with them till morning. Mrs. Ring, though a Choctaw, was intelligent, a neat and tasteful housekeeper, and a woman of more than ordinary intellect. She was ambitious and patriotic to a remarkable extent. She would speak of "our people," and "our nation," and of the schools, academies, council, and prospects of the nation with the confidence and hauteur of a *princess*. Having slaves to do her work she devoted a considerable portion of her time to reading, was fond of novels, knew something of Dickens, and would, with confidence, criticise the magazine literature of the day.

"Uncle Phil," the ferryman, is entitled to a paragraph in these sketches, inasmuch as he was a character in "low life." He was a slave, but his master and mistress—Indians—were both dead. He had been left on the little farm at the ferry, with four orphan children in his care. The children were from four to ten years of age, and left with no protector or friend save the faithful servant. They were the legal heirs of the deceased parents, but there was no court to appoint guardians to take care of the property that it might not be wasted or wrested from its infant proprietors. Phil was in possession, and might have appropriated every thing to his own use and then have absconded; and there would have been no one to pursue him, nor a fugitive-slave law to carry him back at the national expense. But he was a true man, and remained with the helpless orphans, provided food and clothing for them, worked the farm, and kept the ferry. He was so careful of every interest of theirs, and so industrious and faithful, that a neighbor facetiously remarked that Phil owned the farm, the ferry, and four Indian children. He was regarded by his neighbors as a man of unflinching integrity, honesty, and truthfulness.

Returning to Fort Coffee I was doomed to several days' confinement, suffering most excruciatingly from boils; the whole system was inflamed, and fevers set in, from which there was no relief till abscesses had formed and suppuration had taken place. The boils, no doubt, were caused by seed ticks and the bites of other noxious insects, which abounded in that country. It was not possible to sit down upon the trunk of a tree, or pass through the bushes and escape the insects.

Tarantulas, centipedes, and lizzards were numerous, while poisonous serpents were very rare. I remember to have seen but one rattlesnake in the country, and that was of the small black species, and not more than fifteen inches in length, yet its bite would have been fatal. While still lodging in the log-office, we were startled, one morning, at the sight of a huge black snake, known as the "racer," which was deliberately creeping from under the bed, "dragging his slow length along." He was about six feet in length, and full two inches in diameter. While procuring a cudgel to give him battle he made his escape; but his place of *ingress* and *egress* was never discovered, though diligent search was made. Mrs. B. was indignant at his familiarity; the bare thought of a snake in the bedroom rendered her nervous, and she never again slept soundly in that room, though we remained a month.

CHAPTER XIX.

CAMP MEETING ON THE BORDER.

THURSDAY morning, the twenty-first day of September, Rev. Mr. Steele, a half dozen of our Indian friends, Mrs. B., and myself started on horseback to a camp meeting, which was to be held on the border or line which separates the state from the Indian territory. The distance was thirty miles, in a south-east direction, and within the state, in the northern extreme of Scott county. We had provided ourselves with the usual outfit, of blankets, bread and cheese, matches, tin cups, and ropes with which to tether our horses. For miles we traveled through a region of country still decked with primeval beauty. The forests were scarcely marred by the woodman's ax or scathed by the hand of civilization. Beauty and magnificence characterized the scenery in every direction as far as vision could extend. The sky and atmosphere were beautifully serene; the foliage had just begun to assume its rich golden tints, giving indication that autumn was approaching, but the withered branch and the sear leaf were not yet visible. The beautiful birds of the forests were chanting their morning carols; the atmosphere was sweet and balmy, and every object of sense was made to contribute to our pleasure. We returned silent but devout thanks to the Author of all good for so many sources of thrilling delights. As we pursued our journey, we were very forcibly impressed with the beauty of the country in its natural condition, retaining its wildness, its grandeur, and its primitive sublimities. We gazed upon a landscape of unsurpassed loveliness, embracing mountain and valley, hill and dale, with here and there a creek and streamlet, whose waters were dashing onward toward the river, the gulf, and the ocean. The day was delightful, and the exercise upon the backs of our faithful mustangs afforded us rare enjoyment. Blessings on the man who first subdued the noblest animal of earth, teaching him to "obey bit and bridle," and to do the behests of his master! The coach, the barouche, and the sulky may serve a degenerate and effeminate race; but the mettled steed, with saddle and bridle, whip and spur, is alone worthy of a well-developed and vigorous manhood.

A ride of four hours brought us to the base of a considerable mountain, one of the Ozark range, which rejoiced in the euphonious name of "Backbone Ridge." Pursuing a sinuous pathway, making the ascent upon the principle of the *screw*, we succeeded in reaching the summit of the ridge with but little fatigue to ourselves or horses. Here we dismounted to rest our animals, to refresh ourselves, and make a survey of the adjacent country. Standing upon the utmost elevation of the mountain, we had an unobstructed view of the territory, in all directions, for many miles. In the north we gazed upon the Ozarks as far as vision could penetrate. The White Oak and Boston Mountains were prominent in the field of observation. In the south-west the Sugar-Loaf was most conspicuous. Rising hundreds of feet above all others, it stood like a vast pyramid with its head piercing the clouds. The diversified forms which we were able to take in at a glance rendered the view surpassingly grand and beautiful. Some of the hills were pyramidal in shape; others resembled truncated cones; and many were so astonishingly irregular in form and contour as to set all our powers of description at defiance.

Having gratified ourselves with an examination of the well-defined and magnificent map which was spread out before us and beneath our feet, we descended to the plain on the southern side of the ridge. Our trail diverged to the east; and after pursuing its windings through the forest and brushwood for an hour, we came to the residence of Colonel Tom Wall, a Choctaw half-breed. He was the son-in-law of Mrs. H., who was one of our party. Here our Indian friends halted for the night. Mrs. S., Mrs. B., and myself went on an hour's travel further, and received accommodations at the residence of a kind family, a portion of whom were members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. We were fully prepared to enjoy rest and refreshment after a ride of eight hours on horseback, with only a few short intervals of recreation by the roadside. Mrs. B. had never before attempted such an excursion; and though fatigued, yet she had borne it most courageously. We were deeply grateful for the cordial reception, the shelter of the cabin, and the coarse but substantial food that was placed before us.

Friday morning found us fresh and vigorous, and ready to resume our journey as soon as we had finished the morning meal and had worshiped with the kind family. As we were now over the line, and in the state, we were more than ever impressed with the sterility of the soil and the poverty of the inhabitants. The people lived in small and squat log-cabins, with "shake" roofs and outside "*stick and clay*" chimneys. There were a few acres of land inclosed around each hut, a portion of which was planted in corn and vegetables and the balance in cotton; but the prospect of a fair yield was distressingly gloomy. There were holes dug a few feet deep, over which a bucket was suspended to a "sweep-pole;" these were their wells. We did not see a pump in the country. The water was almost as bitter as "the waters of Marah." We found, upon examination, that, immediately below the clay subsoil, there was a stratum of shale, rotten or decomposed, which accounted for the bitterness of the water in the wells. We saw but little stock grazing upon the plains, not a tithe of what we should have seen on the Choctaw side of the line.

At one o'clock in the afternoon we arrived at the camp-ground, finding about one hundred persons already assembled. Many of them had come on the preceding day, but there was no minister present, except one old local preacher, and he had declined all responsibility, inasmuch as the circuit preacher had not sent him a special request to open the services.

Rev. J. C., the circuit preacher, had been summoned as a witness in an important suit, and was gone to a distant county, and did not return during the continuance of the meeting.

The ground was furnished with puncheon seats sufficient to accommodate one hundred and fifty persons. The pulpit was made of *shakes*, and was five feet square. There were but three tents occupied upon the ground, including the one set apart for the use of the preachers. Two tables only were set and furnished with provisions; to these, we believe, every man, woman, and child on the ground, at any time, had a cordial invitation. As small as the congregation was they had assembled from all parts, many of them having come a distance of fifteen miles, either to gratify curiosity or to enjoy the privileges of the occasion.

The economical and industrious mothers had brought with them baskets of raw cotton, the "picking" of which occupied the leisure moments of themselves and daughters during the intervals of the several services. Thus they were obedient to the injunction to be "diligent in business as well as fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." Our food consisted of boiled beef and yams, corn-bread and coffee; the latter article was in an unadulterated state, except that a tin-cup of brown sugar was placed at the head of the table for the exclusive use of "the *parsons* and their women."

Preaching commenced on Friday afternoon; services were also held in the evening, closing with a prayer meeting. On Saturday morning the services were interesting, and in the evening we began to grow hopeful that God would pour out his Spirit upon the people.

Sunday morning our congregation numbered at least one hundred and fifty souls. Just at the hour of preaching a cloud spread over us and poured down a copious rain. The congregation fled to the little log church, which was close at hand, and was almost sufficient to contain the people. It was twenty by twenty-six feet in size, about ten feet high, without floor or ceiling, and furnished with split timbers for slips or pews. Mr. S. preached from the very appropriate words of the prophet Amos, vii, 2, "By whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small." We had a love-feast, and then preaching in the evening, at the close of which it was thought proper to administer the sacrament of the Lord's supper to the few disciples who were there convened. "But could we have the elements in that remote and wilderness locality?" Yes; a brother had already gone to the woods and procured a few clusters of wild grapes, which were found upon a forest-tree. They were of an excellent quality, almost equal in flavor to the Catawba or Isabella. These were pressed to furnish the wine, giving us a pure and genuine article, the first that some of us had ever been permitted to taste. We were sure that it was not an adulterated, alcoholic mixture. The bread was procured and the wine was served to the communicants, at the altar, in a teacup, as there were no glass tumblers on the ground, and probably none in that section of the country. About twenty of the professed disciples of the Lord kneeled upon the ground, at the rude bench, to commemorate the dying sorrows of our crucified but risen Savior. It was an occasion full of interest and solemnity, and never had the eucharistic feast appeared to us more solemn, impressive, and spiritual than there and then, at the midnight hour, with the starry canopy above and the curtain of darkness drawn around us.

Our situation was anomalous. In a wild and unsubdued country, sparsely inhabited by a pioneer people, we scarcely saw an object to remind us of civilization and refinement. Those people had been born and reared on the border, and had been carried by the tide of emigration as it continued to roll westward. The first wave of the advancing tide had always carried them forward to the extreme outposts of the white settlements; they were uneducated, unpolished, and unsophisticated in their customs and social intercourse, but they were possessed of many very excellent traits of character, of which candor, kindness, sympathy, and hospitality were prominent. The stranger was never denied a shelter or sent forth in a hungry and destitute condition from the threshold of the backwoods cabin; the last morsels of corn-bread, jerked-beef, and hominy were cheerfully shared with the unfortunate wanderer.

Thus we were permitted to contemplate society in its primitive state, while yet free from artificial and adventitious embellishments and adornings. And yet, even there, we were destined to witness the exhibitions of pride and vanity as really as in the midst of the societies composed of the refined, the luxurious, and the cultivated.

During Friday and Saturday the females had been clothed in garments of cotton fabric, grown, picked, carded, and wove by their own hands. Their *striped* and *cross-barred* gowns were neat and becoming; but on Sunday morning there was quite a rustling, not of silks but of calicoes. The genuine Merrimac prints were then brought forth from their pine boxes to adorn and beautify the buxom lasses—the blooming misses and belles of the border. After an unusual time had been devoted to the duties of the toilet, as the young ladies came out in flaunting colors, we heard sundry hints and innuendoes among themselves that certain ones of their number were a little vain. To this indirect charge the reigning *belle* retorted, with becoming spirit, "Yes, Mary, I *am* proud, an' I 'me not gwine to say I aint; an' I 've heern tell o' others that 's jist as proud as me! an' *you 'll* be proud, too, when you get *your* calico frock on!" And thus we were forced to the conclusion that human nature is the same, essentially, the world throughout.

On Monday morning we assembled at the pulpit to hold a short concluding service. A few had been converted, who united with the Church on probation. The last exhortation was delivered, the final prayer offered up before the mercy-seat, the parting hymn was sung, and the benediction was invoked. We then seperated, not again to meet till summoned to stand before the tribunal of God in the judgment of the great day.

Mounting our horses we were soon upon the road, homeward bound. Having gone but a few miles we saw indications of a gathering storm; the clouds were banking up, just above the horizon, in the south-west. They increased rapidly, extending to the zenith, and covering the entire heavens; the peals of thunder and the flashes of the lightning became terrific. We held a council, but were powerless to escape the tempest that was just ready to burst upon our heads. Reaching an open space, where the falling timbers, riven by the thunderbolts, would not crush us, we made a halt and there waited till the storm had spent its fury. For an hour and a half the clouds poured out a deluge upon us, which thoroughly drenched us from head to heels; we were well-nigh drowned and completely chilled. Hats, bonnets, capes, dresses, boots, and all were thoroughly soaked, and in this miserable plight we were compelled to ride for four hours before we could obtain shelter or even dry our apparel.

At sunset we arrived at a hospitable log-cabin, where we were kindly received and our wants supplied as far as circumstances would permit. The family exerted themselves to the utmost in ministering to our comfort in our forlorn and wretched condition. But relief came too late; the warm room, dry clothing, and cup of tea failed to restore an equalized and healthful circulation. A bilious attack was the result. Mrs. B. suffered but little inconvenience from the shower-bath of so many hours' continuance, but a violent paroxysm of ague was the consequence in my case. Such a night of agony and suffering I have rarely endured. The cold stage, or rather the *shaking*, was almost sufficient to dislocate every joint of the body, and then the raging fever, with the indescribable torture in the head and loins for several hours, was well-nigh beyond endurance.

When the morning dawned we were feverish and exhausted, and wholly destitute of will or energy. To remain we could not, and, hence, it was absolutely necessary to make an effort to prosecute our journey to the end. We set out as early as possible that we might have the benefit of the morning atmosphere. The day threatened to be intensely hot, and, at the slow gait we were compelled to travel, it would require at least six hours to accomplish that portion of the journey still before us. With an aching head and feverish system we slowly directed our steps toward the mission, deeply impressed with the conviction that the Methodist *itinerancy* in a wilderness country is a tangible reality and no cunningly-devised fable. If any should doubt the correctness of such a conclusion let him make the experiment. After an absence of five days and nights we were again at Fort Coffee, and devoutly thankful for a home in which to rest, take medicines and recuperate.

CHAPTER XX.

WEDDING—SEMINOLES.

Mrs. H., a Choctaw woman, has just sent a servant to ask if we would be willing to attend a wedding at her house; her youngest daughter was about to be united in wedlock to a fine young Indian, who was serving as a clerk in a dry-goods store at the Agency. As we expressed our pleasure at being her guests on the eventful occasion, Mrs. H. sent us horses and saddles, and a servant to conduct us to her residence.

We found a multitude of people assembled to witness the ceremonies. Mrs. H.'s dwelling consisted of two square rooms, built of logs, and standing separate, leaving a space of ten or twelve feet between them, which served as a hall or court. There were porches in front and rear of the buildings. The invited guests occupied the hall and porches, while the lower class of natives, who were prompted by curiosity to be present, were scattered about the yards, seated upon the ground, and smoking their pipes in silence; they had never witnessed the marriage ceremonies solemnized by a minister.

At nine o'clock the bridal party were marshaled upon the front porch; friends held lighted candles, the natives swarmed about the yard, and then, in due form, according to the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the nuptials were celebrated. It was probably the first instance in which a minister had officiated on such an occasion within the limits of the Moshulatubbee district.

The spectators thought the "talk" was altogether too brief; they had confidently anticipated a sermon, or "big talk," at the wedding. Thinking that other ceremonies would be observed, at the proper time, before the guests should disperse, they relighted their pipes and again seated themselves upon the ground, and patiently waited to see what should transpire. After the supper had been served Mrs. H. gave them the remnants of the feast.

The wedding supper was prepared in good taste, very far surpassing many to which we have sat down among white people. As the evening was far advanced when the guests dispersed, and as we were cordially invited to remain till morning, we consented to do so, and were very comfortably entertained. It was the first night Mrs. B. ever spent under the roof of an Indian. In the morning we ate breakfast and worshiped with the family, after which Mrs. H. ordered her horses and sent us back to Fort Coffee, escorted by her faithful *boy*, Cæsar.

Marriage ceremonies were strictly observed by the Choctaws. Ministers, the agent, chief, interpreter, and light-horsemen were legally authorized to solemnize the rites of matrimony. I am not aware that any heathen marriage ceremonies were observed by any of the tribe. They seldom made feasts or engaged in dancing on those interesting and eventful occasions.

SEMINOLES.

During the last week of September a delegation of about thirty Seminole Indians came down the river, landing at Fort Coffee, *en route* for the office of Major Armstrong, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs. The Seminoles had but recently immigrated to the territory, and were temporarily camping in the Creek country, above the mouth of the Canadian river. As they were few in number they were endeavoring to form an alliance with the Creeks, and to settle permanently upon their lands. The terms were agreed to, and the delegation had been sent to obtain the aid and approval of the Superintendent, in consummating and legalising the contract.

The men composing the delegation were tall, well-developed, and muscular. Whether they were fair specimens or picked men we do not know. Of their intellectual capabilities we could not form an intelligent judgment; but the opinion of an uneducated Choctaw might be given upon the subject. The delegates were at the Agency; a number of the Choctaws had come to see their red brothers, to shake hands, and smoke the pipe of friendship. Mr. H., the merchant, was present, and noticed that a shrewd Choctaw was carefully scrutinising the physiognomy and proportions of the Seminole chief. "Well, Tub-bee," said Mr. H., "what do you think of him? Is he a great man?" The native replied, "Him great man! He got big body—eat *tom-ful-la*—plenty much! But he no brave chief—he make big talk never! He got not much plenty sense—he head make like jug, heap!"

It was evident that Tubbee regarded the Seminole as a hugely-developed gormand, who was sadly deficient in intellect. The circumstances of the Seminoles were such that we could not form an opinion as to their character, enterprise, and future prospects. Their tribe had been called to endure untold and indescribable sufferings. They were then sundered; a portion had been forcibly ejected from their homes, and had been carried to the territory; the balance, under the command of the renowned "Billy Bowlegs," were still secreted in the swamps of Florida.

In the year of 1843 Rev. Mr. M'Kenny was sent by the Presbyterian Board of Missions to labor with the Seminoles; but finding them in an unsettled condition he could do nothing with any probability of success. Before the year closed Mr. M. was permitted to abandon the effort; and at the opening of Spencer Academy he was appointed Superintendent of that institution. He there found an interesting and promising field of labor, into which he entered with zeal and activity. Himself and family spent a day with us at Fort Coffee as they were on their journey to the Spencer Academy. Mr. M. and wife were intelligent, zealous, and devoted missionaries.

CHAPTER XXI.

BALL-PLAYING.

The border Indians are all fond of games; many of them have learned to play cards and to gamble with considerable skill; but with the most of the tribes, and especially the Choctaws, ball-playing is the favorite amusement. They have an irresistible passion for such sports and pastimes. Their game was quite similar to that known among our lads as "*Bandy*." They did not hurl the ball with the naked hand, but each had a cudgel, about three feet long, at the end of which there was a net-work or basket made to resemble the shape of a man's hand; with that *bandy club* they would catch and hurl the ball with astonishing force and precision. Every Indian manifested a deep interest in the play; old, middle-aged, and young of both sexes, would invariably attend as spectators, if not as participants in the amusement. Such was the eagerness to be present on every occasion that all other business matters must be suspended and every interest stand in abeyance, and nothing must be permitted to come in conflict with the ball-play. We recently had an illustration of this truth. The Rev. Mr. Steele had published that a camp meeting would be held at the base of the Sugar-Loaf Mountain, near to the residence of Colonel Thomson M'Kenny, to commence on the eighteenth day of August. The meeting had been published in every community within the limits of the district; the preparations were all made, and ministers were engaged to be present to assist in the services. But, three days before the time set for the meeting to commence, Colonel M. sent a polite note to Mr. S., informing him that it was necessary to postpone the camp meeting for a few days, as it would come in conflict with the interests of a ball-play, which would come off at *Ayakni Achuckma*, the council-ground, commencing on the day set for the meeting. The young men of Puckchenubbee district had sent a challenge to their brothers of the Moshulatubbee to meet them in their favorite game. Indians, regarding the code of honor as authoritative, never pocket a challenge, but boldly meet their antagonists, utterly regardless of consequences.

When a challenge has been given and formally accepted, and the time and place agreed upon by their oracles, then the *light-horsemen* are instructed to notify every man, woman, and child in the district that a play will commence upon a set day. Whole families will repair to the ground, build their camp fires, and there remain till the contest is fairly ended, the laurels won, and the victors crowned. It sometimes occurs that some sharp trader will smuggle ardent spirits into the camps, when a general carousal at once ensues, terminating in bruises and broken heads; violent deaths occasionally result from a general drunken frolic; while it is but an act of justice to record that very many of the substantial Choctaws do not drink to excess under any circumstances; and they labor vigilantly to keep whisky out of the nation.

Mr. Steele at once abandoned the effort to hold his camp meeting at the *Sugar-Loaf;* for he knew that it would be extreme folly to come in competition with the play. But, a short time after his defeat, he ascertained that the district court would, at a certain time, be held at the council-house; and, as it would bring a multitude of people together, the most of whom would have no business in the courts to occupy their time and attention, Mr. Steele thought it would be a most favorable occasion for a camp meeting. He accordingly announced, all around his circuit, that a camp meeting would be held at the council-ground during court-week. The necessary preparations were made, and, at the set time, Mr. Steele was promptly on the ground ready to open his battery and pour *hot shot* into the bosom of the enemy, and press "the battle to the gate." But, alas! he was again doomed to disappointment; for, after the crowds had assembled and arranged their camps, some one had vauntingly hurled a ball high into the air, accompanied with a challenge to a game to commence immediately. The challenge was accepted in a moment, and instantly the whole camp was filled with excitement. In a few minutes the preliminaries were all settled, the ground-limits defined, and the contestants in their appropriate positions. The interest in the game became at once intense and allabsorbing, and the result was that both court and camp meeting were indefinitely postponed.

Mr. Steele was left to bear the chagrin and mortification of his second defeat with that philosophy which Christianity alone inspires. He retired from the camp consoling himself with the reflection that his intention had been right, his motives pure in God's sight; he had done what he could, and with that his responsibility ended. It was the last effort of that character during the conference year. At the ensuing conference session Mr. Steele was appointed to a circuit in the southern portion of the nation, embracing portions of the Pushmataha and Puckchenubbee districts.

CHAPTER XXII.

MURDER—ARSON—SICKNESS.

About the last of September we received intelligence of the murder of Mr. Vore and family, who had resided for some years a few miles above Fort Coffee, in the Cherokee nation. As the rumor spread the people became excited and aroused to an unusual extent. Mr. Vore was a merchant, an upright, honest, and reputable man, who had been very highly esteemed by his Cherokee neighbors; he had been engaged in selling goods, buying peltries, and in a general traffic with the Indians.

On the evening of the twenty-fourth of September a man called at the residence of Mr. Vore to obtain accommodations for the night, and, as there was no public house in reach, he was taken in. On the following morning the neighbors discovered that the house and store had disappeared, although no fire had been seen in the night, nor had any alarm been heard. A crowd soon collected, and, on examination, discovered the charred skeletons of three individuals, supposed to be those of Mr. and Mrs. Vore and of some one who chanced to stop with them. They had no children and kept no servants or clerks about the store. A few rods from the smoldering ruins were found the money-safe and a few drawers and trunks, in which fine and costly goods had been kept; all were opened and rifled of their contents. It became evident that the inmates had first been murdered, after which the store had been robbed and finally burned.

A saddle and mule were found in the corral, which led to the identification of the stranger who had perished with the family. The animal was sent to Fort Smith, recognized at once as a *Santa Fé* mule, which belonged to one Thomas Farley, a carpenter, who resided in Van Buren. Mr. Farley had been employed a number of weeks at our mission; we had paid him his wages, when we no longer needed his services, and he had left Fort Coffee and gone into the Cherokee nation in search of employment; he was a poor man and left a helpless and dependent family. The community where the foul murder was committed were intensely excited, and manifested a determination of purpose to ferret out and bring to justice the offenders. Suspicion at once rested upon three half-breed Cherokees, who were notorious desperadoes, and had long been regarded as outlaws. They were of the name of Starr, Tom Ben, and Ellis. They were charged with the butchery of a family of the name of Wright that perished some time previous to that period, and also to have acted a prominent part in the "Cane Hill tragedy," the revolting details and horrors of which are scarcely paralleled in the annals of blood and crime. The executive of the tribe had offered liberal rewards for their apprehension, and vigorous and persevering efforts had been made to arrest them, but hitherto without success. They did not dare to remain in their own nation, for they were marked men and would be readily recognised in almost any community. They prowled about, secreting themselves in the daytime and prosecuting their work of pillage and slaughter under cover of darkness, making their forays upon Choctaws, Creeks, Seminoles, and Cherokees as opportunity should occur. It was confidently believed that their principal den, in which they burrowed, was within the limits of the state of Arkansas, where they doubtless had confederates.

Murders and violent deaths were by no means rare in the Cherokee tribe, but with the Choctaws deeds of robbery were scarcely known to have occurred. I never heard of a single instance of highway robbery being committed by a native of that tribe. Violent deaths, occasioned by intoxication, were sometimes known, but they were peaceable and quiet, with rare exceptions, and often boasted that "they never shed the blood of a white man."

The border tribes were all living in amity and peace; not one sustained a hostile attitude or relation toward any other tribe; and any well-disposed Indian might travel with impunity throughout the entire Indian territory. And yet their intercourse was not cordial or familiar, and it was an extremely rare occurrence for a man of one tribe to settle permanently with another people and become identified with them.

This statement does not apply to the intercourse of the Choctaws and Chickasaws; they were evidently but one people, originally of the same stock, and now integral parts of but one nation.

As the month of October advanced we increased our efforts to complete our repairs and finish the new building before the session of the conference, which was to be held in the month of November. Our teamster was sick, and as we must have a few barrels of lime to complete the plastering it was thought safe to send our Hibernian man of all work, with the oxen and wagon, to Fort Smith to procure the article. Dan was orderly and well-disposed, but of his previous habits and history we knew nothing; he was a true son of the "Howly mother Church," and a devout believer in the miraculous gifts and graces of the immortal Saint Patrick.

Dan set out, with a due appreciation of the responsibilities devolving upon him, with instructions to return within three days; but the third day elapsed and he did not make his appearance. Late in the evening of the fourth day he arrived in an exceedingly-happy mood. His vivacity seemed to be without limit and his wit sparkled and blazed; but on the following morning Dan was moody and grave, his flask was empty and his thirst was consuming him. There had, doubtless, been a constitutional tendency to thirst with him, and, yielding to temptation, he had imbibed the "swate whisky till he had become jist dhrunk a bit!" It was a clear case, and all saw it and knew it to be true, that Dan Mahony had drank to intoxication. He had even spent a night and a day in the canebrake without so much as unyoking the cattle or giving them either food or water. After waiting for him to become entirely sober I sent for him; he came to the office, professing to be exceedingly penitent, which profession was, doubtless, sincere to some extent; for he was doing a heavy penance in sobering off so abruptly. We felt considerable sympathy for him, yet we could not tolerate such conduct even in hired men in connection with our mission, and so dismissed him.

Being unable to procure a hand immediately to take Dan's place I assisted the mason for a few days, but greatly to my peril. The weather was excessively warm, and the atmosphere was loaded with malarious exhalations from the marsh lands adjacent to the mission, and, not being accustomed to severe manual labor, on the fourth day of my service as *hod-carrier* I was prostrated with an attack of inflammatory bilious fever, which came near proving fatal. We were compelled to send to Fort Smith for a physician, and for a number of days my situation was critical, with life and death quivering in the balances. During the tedious weeks of my confinement I frequently thought of Dan, and regretted that a little more leniency and mercy had not been exercised toward him, as it might have inured to our mutual benefit. I never again saw or heard any thing more of Dan Mahony.

CHAPTER XXIII.

INDIAN PREACHER—CONFERENCE.

On the fifth day of November Rev. John Page, a Choctaw Indian, preached to us at Fort Coffee. The services were held in the little office, where I was still confined with the fever. The sermon was plain, Scriptural, and earnest, rendering the exercises interesting and profitable. Mr. Page preached in English, speaking the language intelligibly, but not correctly; his custom was to preach to his people in the native tongue.

During the week Mr. Page spent with us he gave us a brief sketch of his life. When a lad, in a heathen state, he had been sent to the Choctaw Academy, where he remained a number of years, and only left when the institution was disorganized. At the time of his entering the school he was utterly destitute of moral and religious instruction; he had never been taught his duty to himself, his fellow-men, or to his God. He was received into the Sunday school, where he received his first lessons of a religious character; he there received light into his dark and benighted mind; there he felt himself to be a sinner exposed to death. His faithful instructors impressed upon his mind and conscience the duty of repentance and faith in the Savior as conditions of mercy and acceptance with God.

While under strong convictions for sin, with a soul yearning for peace, he attended a protracted meeting; he became deeply penitent, made sincere confessions, sought the Lord with all his heart, and obtained "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." He united with the Methodist Episcopal Church, and became a diligent student of God's word.

Soon after his conversion the Academy was closed up, when it became necessary for Mr. Page to seek instruction elsewhere; for he was not yet qualified for the work to which he believed God had called him. He was taken into the family of a minister, where his privileges for mental and moral culture enabled him to make rapid advancement. Believing that God required him to stand as a watchman upon the walls of Zion he devoted his last year in Kentucky to theological studies, receiving instruction from the pastor of the Church of which he was a member.

In the summer of 1842 Mr. Page was licensed to preach, and recommended as a suitable person to be admitted into the itinerant work. His purpose was to go to his own tribe and labor with his own people, from whom he had been separated from his early youth, and whom he had not visited since their removal from Mississippi to the Indian territory. Mr. Page's recommendation was sent to the Arkansas conference, which, at that time, embraced the state of Arkansas, the greater portion of the Indian territory, and the northern portion of Texas. Its session was held in the month of November, 1842, at Helena, on the Mississippi river. Mr. Page was present, admitted, and appointed to the Puckchenubbee circuit, in the southern part of the Choctaw nation. To reach the session of the conference he had traveled near one thousand miles, and from Helena to his circuit required a journey of seven hundred miles more through a wilderness country.

Such was his initiation into the work of a traveling preacher of the Methodist Episcopal Church. At the time of his visit to Fort Coffee he had just completed his first year in the ministry, and was on his way to the conference which was to hold its session at Clarksville, Arkansas.

Mr. Page, at that time, was twenty-two years old, rather below the medium hight, and neither stout nor muscular. He was scrupulously neat in his person, well-formed, active, and sprightly. He was gentlemanly, self-possessed, and graceful in his manners, and though modest and unobtrusive, yet not wanting in confidence. His head was of medium size and well-formed; his cheek-bones were high and prominent; his eye sparkling and very expressive; his mouth large, and his teeth, though perfect, were irregular. He was by no means handsome, even for a Choctaw; but he was bright and sensible, a man of unflinching integrity and moral worth; and was eminently qualified for usefulness in preaching the Gospel to his own people. He loved his nation devotedly, and was indefatigable in his efforts to advance their interests, and to improve their condition intellectually and morally.

On Sunday afternoon, November the twelfth, Mr. Page and myself went down to Fort Smith, where an appointment had been made for us to hold religious services. Mr. Page preached from the words of the prophet Daniel, xii, 4, "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." The discourse was of the missionary character. He quoted, very appropriately, many of those texts of Scripture which contemplate the complete success and triumph of the Gospel in all lands. He spoke eloquently of what the Gospel had done for the people of his own tribe; the spirit of war and bloodshed had been superseded by the peaceful and forbearing spirit of the Christian religion. God's word had shined upon them as "a light in a dark place;" the rites and superstitions of their heathen ancestors had been abandoned; and the ordinances of the Christian Church had been introduced successfully in his nation. The sermon was plain, simple, and practical, and listened to with interest by an intelligent congregation, some of whom were officers of the United States army.

On Monday morning Rev. John Cowle, of the Fort Smith circuit, Mr. Page, and myself set out on horseback for Clarksville, to attend the session of the conference. Crossing the river at Van Buren, we traveled down the Arkansas in an easterly direction. The bottom lands were not extensive; and though very rich and productive, yet they were rendered almost valueless by reason of the floods that spread over them annually. The uplands were very poor, the soil being thin and gravelly, and the surface almost covered with sandstone. The timber, like the most we saw in that state, was a stunted and worthless growth of oak, embracing every known species of the *genus quercus*. The variety known as the "black-jack" was said to be the most valuable, as it was made to serve an important purpose in the administration of justice. Judge LYNCH presided over the SUPERIOR COURT of that country; and all the culprits found guilty at his tribunal, were taken and lashed to the nearest *black-jack*, while the penalty was duly inflicted. "The Black-Jack Court" was an established institution, for which the people entertained profound respect. The most fearful words that ever fell upon the ears of a poor culprit were, "You are doomed, sir, to *look up a black-jack!*"

The White Oak Mountains were in full view on our left, some twenty to thirty miles distant. We crossed but two living streams of water in the journey—the Little Mulberry and the Frog Bayou. They were small creeks of clear, pure water, having their sources in the neighboring mountains. As the sun set we came to the cabin of a widow lady, who consented, for a consideration, to give us shelter. There were no hotels in that section of the country for the accommodation of wayfaring men. But to the credit of the people of that renowned state I will here record, that they were never known to bolt their doors against benighted travelers; the unfortunate, the hungry, and the destitute were always sheltered and fed. We were duly thankful for admission to the cabin, for the marsh hay upon which our animals fed, and for the corn-bread, baked yams, and sweet milk with which we refreshed ourselves. We regarded the house as justly belonging to the "better class." Tuesday morning we paid a moderate bill, and renewed our journey. The dinner hour found us at the log shanty of Doctor M., who was a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, as he informed us. From his own lips we soon learned that he was eminently successful in the practice of medicine. He had professionally visited sixty patients during the "sickly season"—had lost none. He had effectually cured all, and had so thoroughly done up his work that he was now out of business. But the Doctor thought it was "kind o' providential that there was no more *ayger* in *them thar* parts; for his pills, *iles*, and *intments* were used up, and there was no money in his *beat;* and he was not the man who was gwine to buy physic on tick."

He was evidently a character, and might be regarded as a representative man in that country, and one who was doubtless a leading spirit. He was over six feet high, with a huge frame, considerably stooped forward, with a rough and haggard outline. The

Doctor was probably about fifty years of age, dressed in cotton pants and shirt which was literally "home-made," as the cotton had been grown, carded, spun, and wove by his wife and daughters. He had coarse brogans on his feet, while his legs were bare, and was destitute of vest and coat; his *face*, beard, and hair were, with an emphasis let it be said, "unwashed, unshaved, and unshorn." Our horses were fed, and we sat down to a substantial dinner of jerked-beef and potatoes, with a dessert of corn *dodger* and sour milk. When we inquired for the bill the Doctor was well-nigh insulted. "Me a Methodis an charge a pas'n! never *done* sich a thing no how! am allus glad to see 'em an have 'em stop at my *plantation*. We hain't got nothin much nice, but you shall allus be welcome to the best we 've got, that 's sartin!"

We sincerely and heartily thanked the hospitable Doctor, and ever since remember him as one of the benefactors of his race. Arriving at Clarksville in the afternoon, we found it to be a village containing two or three hundred inhabitants; it was the county seat of Johnson county, had a small brick court-house, a small school-house, and a church in process of erection. The buildings were mostly one-story frames, rough and unpainted; there were a few log-cabins, and a very few comfortable and well-finished family residences.

On Wednesday morning the conference session was opened, and, in the absence of the Bishop, Rev. J. C. Parker was chosen President; Rev. Mr. Ratcliff was elected Secretary. Here we met Rev. E. R. Ames and Rev. W. H. Goode. Mr. Ames was traveling and attending to the duties of his office as Missionary Secretary, and Mr. Goode was returning to Fort Coffee after an absence of five months.

On the second day of the session Bishop Andrew arrived and took his seat as President; and, on the third day of the session, J. C. Parker, W. Ratcliff, and A. Hunter were appointed delegates to the General conference, which was to convene in the city of New York the following May.

A missionary meeting was held on Monday evening, at which addresses were delivered by Revs. E. R. Ames, W. H. Goode, and John Page. The session had previously adjourned. W. H. Goode, H. C. Benson, and John Page were appointed to Fort Coffee Academy and mission.

On Tuesday morning we mounted our horses and set out upon our journey home, to renew our labors in the field to which we had been reappointed. Reaching Fort Coffee on Wednesday evening we were rejoiced to find all in health; for in that country we were never without apprehensions of bilious attacks, especially during the summer and autumn.

Owing to the low stage of water in the Arkansas Mr. Goode and family had been delayed several weeks, rendering their journey to the Indian country very tedious. Before reaching Little Rock the boat in which they were ascending the river was snagged and went to the bottom, but, providentially, the accident occurred in shoal water. No lives were lost, but the goods on board were seriously damaged, and the more perishable were utterly destroyed. Mr. Goode sustained heavy loss in the destruction of his library and the damage done to his family's wardrobe, as well as to the supplies which had been purchased for the mission, none of which were insured.

Mr. Goode obtained a temporary refuge for his family at the humble quarters of an overseer on a cotton plantation, from which shelter they were soon driven by Romish intolerance. Mrs. Goode was prostrated by sickness, and altogether too feeble to give the required attention to her little children, much less to endure the fatigues of a land journey to Little Rock. Providence sent relief in the hour of need; they reached the city in safety, where accommodations were procured, and where they were compelled to remain till there should be a sufficient rise in the river to enable a steamboat to ascend as far as Fort Smith. Mr. Goode purchased a horse and set out by land to attend conference, where we met after a separation of seven months.

My first itinerant year was now closed, during which I had preached one hundred and eighty-eight times, had traveled four thousand, one hundred and sixteen miles, and had received just two hundred dollars for my support, out of which I had paid the traveling expenses of Mrs. B. and myself from Greencastle to Fort Coffee, a distance of sixteen hundred miles.

During the five months immediately preceding the conference session I had superintended the mission, looking after the temporal interests during the week, and preaching regularly on Sunday at Fort Coffee in the morning and at New Hope in the afternoon.

Our repairs were now completed, and all things well-nigh ready for the reception of the pupils and the opening of the Academy, but the furniture and bedding were stored at Little Rock waiting a rise of the river.

During the first week of December there was a small swell of the Arkansas, which enabled a light boat to make a trip to Fort Gibson, but it was wholly freighted with supplies for the troops at that station, and, hence, did not bring our goods. Mrs. Goode and children, however, were on board, and most heartily did we welcome them to their new home in the wilderness. The children were five in number, ranging from two to twelve years of age, all of whom are still living, and four of the number have become heads of families since that period. But I must regard them as *children* still; the little girls of six and eight years, with faces bright and beaming with laughter, and fun, and frolic, surely *they* can never be grave and sedate matrons! and the *boys* I can only imagine to be running, leaping, trundling hoops, and shooting with the bow and arrow. *Tempus fugit!*

CHAPTER XXIV.

ON GUARD.

ABOUT the middle of December Major Armstrong received at Fort Coffee sixty thousand dollars in specie, to be paid over to the several Indian agents, to be distributed as annuities to the tribes embraced in that superintendency. It had been boxed and officially sealed at the New Orleans mint, each box containing one thousand dollars.

The boat had come late in the afternoon, and the boxes of coin were delivered to Mr. Armstrong, at our mission, about sunset; but, before it was possible to bring a wagon and horses to remove the treasure, a messenger arrived from the Agency with the sad intelligence that Mr. Irwin, the brother-in-law of Mr. Armstrong, was dying. He must go at once to the bedside of his dying friend; but it was impossible to carry the money with him, for its weight was over two tuns *avoirdupois*. What could be done under the circumstances? It was almost dark; it would require a stout team of horses to draw it, and no such team was at hand. It would not be secure in the hands of his servants; for the Choctaw and Cherokee Indians knew of its arrival, and might be tempted to take possession of it and appropriate it to personal and private uses.

After consultation it was thought proper to convey the money up the hill and deposit it in the little log office, and appoint H. C. Benson to *guard* it till morning. Now, it must be remembered that the office was scarcely six feet high, built of small logs, had a frail door and window, and was covered with "shakes," or clapboards. Our Cherokee neighbors were not scrupulously honest, for they had amalgamated with the whites till they had greatly deteriorated, and acts of robbery and murder were not rare occurrences with them. Many of them knew the money to be at Fort Coffee: hence the guarding of such an amount was thought to involve a degree of peril.

The arrangement was made, and Mr. Armstrong went to the bedside of his dying friend. I was placed on duty. To guard so much treasure was a responsibility of no trifling character, especially in so frail a castle. It was necessary to be armed, but there were neither Sharpe's rifles nor Colt's revolvers on the premises, and the only weapons from which a choice could be made were the old ax, with which the cook split his wood for the stove, and the shot-gun, with which I had sometimes amused myself in shooting rabbits. The former was thought to be the most available, and consequently selected. A fire was kindled in the chimney, a mattress and blankets spread upon the floor, the door locked, and the ax placed in a convenient position. After reading two or three hours I lay down, with my head in close proximity to a box which contained five thousand dollars in gold, and there I slept soundly till sunrise in the morning. On waking up I made diligent examination and found myself and the money all on hand; the robbers had not come.

During the night Mr. Irwin died, and preparations were made to bury him in the little graveyard at Fort Coffee, where soldiers had been interred during the time that the troops were stationed at that place.

Mr. Irwin was a single man, a native of Tennessee, and had served for some time in the office of the Choctaw Agent as a clerk. For years he had been suffering with pulmonary consumption. At four o'clock in the afternoon we conveyed the lifeless remains to the little graveyard in the edge of the forest. There were about twelve persons in attendance, and no ladies except Mrs. G. and Mrs. B.

The funeral services were conducted by Mr. Goode; they were peculiarly solemn and impressive. It seemed sad to commit a friend to the dust in a wilderness country, where no mother, sister, or female friend would ever pour out tears of fond affection over the sleeping one. We learned anew the lesson of our mortality while we stood in that wild cemetery on the hill-side. The words of Dr. Young occurred to our recollection with a force and vividness hitherto unfelt:

"This is creation's melancholy vault;
The vale funereal, the sad cypress gloom,
The land of apparitions, empty shades!

All, all on earth is shadow; all beyond
Is substance; the reverse is folly's creed—
How solid all where change shall be no more!"

After the funeral services were closed a wagon with four horses came for the treasure, and I was relieved from guard duty.

CHAPTER XXV.

QUARTERLY MEETING—JOURNEY, ETC.

NEAR the close of December our first quarterly meeting was held at Fort Coffee. Revs. J. C. Parker, J. Harrel, and Andrew Hunter were present. At the recent session of the conference they had been appointed a committee to audit the books and accounts of our mission during the preceding year.

J. C. Parker was the presiding elder, but left on Monday morning without having held a quarterly conference; but in the evening we met in an upper room to organize and hold the first quarterly conference ever held in the northern district of the nation. The members present were W. H. Goode, preacher in charge, and H. C. Benson and John Page, assistant preachers. Mr. Goode took the chair as President, and H. C. Benson was appointed Secretary. We had neither stewards nor class-leaders; the usual questions were asked and answered, and the regular minutes were made and recorded.

Our goods had not yet arrived. Mr. Goode had written repeatedly to the merchant with whom they were stored, but had received no answer. It was finally determined that I should go in search and not return without them.

Accordingly, on the morning of the twenty-seventh of December, I set out out on horseback for Fort Smith. There I left my horse, to be returned to Fort Coffee, and took the coach for Little Rock, a distance of three hundred miles, and over a rough, rocky, and mountainous region of country. The coach halted to spend the night at the house of Dr. Williams, on Little Mulberry creek. The Doctor lived on a farm, and made an honest penny by keeping "private entertainment." His family were intelligent members of the Presbyterian Church.

Passing through Ozark and Clarksville, the coach halted to spend the second night at the residence of the Honorable Samuel Adams. Mr. Adams was the Lieutenant-Governor of the state at the time, and soon after, upon the resignation of Governor Yell, became the acting-Governor, and continued to fill the office up to the period of his death, which occurred about two years after that time.

Mr. Adams was a plain farmer, a man of irreproachable character, and with a sufficiency of good common-sense to qualify him for the responsible post to which he had been called. It is doubtful whether Arkansas ever had a more honest or faithful officer than Samuel Adams.

Mrs. Adams was a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. By the kindness of Governor Adams we were introduced to his family, and worshiped with them before retiring to our beds for the night; but just before retiring we accidentally learned that a small steamboat had been seen that day on the river, near Pittsburg, and, from the description, it seemed quite probable that it was the *Pulaski*, a small boat, upon which we expected our goods to be shipped. Mr. Adams kindly offered the use of a negro servant and horses to take me to the river and ascertain whether or not the information was correct. The distance was not more than six or seven miles. The horses were saddled, and, with my faithful pilot, I soon galloped across the country to Pittsburg, and learned that the Pulaski had gone up with a considerable amount of furniture on board, and it was probably ours. So, returning to the Governor's, I procured a fresh horse to ride across the country to Ozark, a distance of thirty miles. As the river was very low and the boat scarcely able to make any progress, and besides there was a bend which amounted almost to a semicircle, it was believed that I could reach Ozark before the arrival of the boat.

Mr. Adams resolutely declined accepting any compensation for the services of his boy and horses; but "[illegible]," nothing loth, accepted a gratuity, which fully indemnified him for the loss of a night's sleep. Traveling at a brisk gait I reached Ozark several hours in advance of the Pulaski. She came, at length, with our goods on board, but the captain was not able to proceed any further. Two or three days were spent in fruitless efforts to pass over shoal-water just above Ozark, where the current was very rapid. Our goods were finally stored, and I was doomed to remain for a rise of the river; how long it would be none knew. I dare not return without the goods; my instructions, at least, were to that effect. Suspense by the river-side waiting for a boat is always horrible, but to wait for rains and floods to swell a stream so as to render it navigable, amounts to agony. There were no indications of a rain, not even a cloud as big as a man's hand; like "hope deferred it made the heart sick."

Ozark was a little village on the north bank of the river, containing, perhaps, a hundred souls. It was the seat of justice for Franklin county; the little frame court-house was one story high and about sixteen feet square. It was all in one room, but there were dense thickets of brushwood to which juries might retire for deliberation while making up a verdict. The log jail was much more substantial, and altogether a better institution; it was well patronized. There was one hotel, kept by the sheriff, who was, also, keeper of the jail. There was a dry-goods store, kept by Mr. S., who had been a minister and once a member of the Memphis conference, but he had fallen. The little school was taught by a brother of an ex-governor of Tennessee. There was one law office, the proprietor of which was afterward honored with a seat in Congress. There were a few mechanic shops and an ample supply of groceries, at which liquors were dealt out with a liberal hand. There were very few families in the town; the men were mostly bachelors; a few had families in Mississippi and Tennessee. Not a few, I was told, had fine colored housekeepers, whose little ones were much brighter than their mothers, and yet, I believe, there were no abolitionists in the place.

Every night witnessed a tumultuous gathering and carousal on the public square. With a camp-fire, to give light, the assembled crowds would drink, wrestle, sing, dance, box, and shout in the wildest fashion till a late hour of the night. For six days and nights I was doomed to endure such society.

On Sunday arrangement was made for me to preach in the court-house. At the ring of the hand-bell, which a servant from the hotel carried over and rung most vigorously on the occasion, the room was soon filled. One lady only was seen in the congregation; she was the wife of the sheriff. There was excellent attention; not a few joined in the singing with an energy which was praiseworthy indeed. And yet, perhaps, every man in the room was armed with deadly weapons; each, no doubt, had one of the far-famed "Arkansas tooth-picks"—Bowie-knives—in his pocket. The benediction being pronounced a number of the sturdy fellows came forward to give the "*pas'n*"—parson—a vigorous shake of the hand; they had a profound respect for *parsons*, and did not fail to give them a cordial greeting on proper occasions. On the following day I learned that the schoolmaster, who is supposed to know, pronounced the discourse the most *logical* and *orthodox* that he had heard since he had left Tennessee; it was probably the only sermon he had heard in the state.

But as all things earthly must have an end, so the period of trial in that village finally came to a termination. On the fifth day of January, 1844, the steamboat Eveline came along, with a cargo destined for Fort Gibson. She was a light-draught steamer, designed especially for low water or small rivers. In a short time I had our goods on board, and with emotions of sincere gratitude we bid adieu to Ozark, with a devout prayer that we might never again be doomed to endure another week of such unmitigated social wretchedness. On Sunday, the seventh, the boat reached Fort Coffee, and we then felt that we were ready to open the Academy.

The chiefs and trustees were immediately notified of our readiness to receive pupils, and to engage at once in teaching.

We were only prepared to open the male department of the Academy; the buildings of the female branch of the school had to be erected entire.

On the sixteenth day of January we had a visit from an intelligent Cherokee Indian, who had come a distance of forty miles, to make an arrangement for the education of his two sons; he was anxious to place them in the Academy. He wished them taught morality and the principles of the Christian religion, as well as a knowledge of science and literature.

We sympathized with him in his disappointment, but we had no discretionary power—the school was the property of the Choctaws, and its halls were open to none others. At that time the Cherokees had no boarding-school for male pupils; they had, indeed, no high-school in their nation, established and sustained by themselves.

There were three or four boarding-schools wholly sustained by missionaries, at which females were admitted, and well educated.

The district common-school system was the only national-school system in the tribe; and though it was excellent for the more advanced in civilisation, yet it was not adapted to the wants of the illiterate masses.

CHAPTER XXVI.

OUR COOKS LEAVE—FARMING.

THE German man and wife who had been employed by Mr. G. and brought from Cincinnati, when he first came to Fort Coffee, became dissatisfied. They had been employed to do the cooking and chamber-work of the institution, but the situation did not please them. They had no German friends with whom to associate, and were anxious to return to Cincinnati. We were reluctant to let them go; they were pious, intelligent, and faithful; and we had become very much attached to them. But they would not be reconciled, and so returned to their former home and friends.

Our plans were now somewhat frustrated; we were daily expecting the students, and there were none to cook, wash, and do chamber-work. Mrs. G. and Mrs. B. could do very well till the school should open, but no longer. In the midst of our perplexity Mr. G. fell in with a colored man at Fort Smith, who claimed to be skilled in the duties of the kitchen; and his wife and daughter could do the work of the rooms and the laundry. Charles was free, having bought himself; his eldest daughter was also free; but his wife and the younger children were slaves, belonging to a Mr. B., who resided at Van Buren. It was arranged that

Charles should hire the time of his wife and children of their master, and then hire himself and family to do the work of our establishment. The terms were settled and the contract entered into; and in a few days Charles and his family were duly installed at their respective posts of duty, and we were again in readiness for the arrival of the pupils.

During the fall and winter we had enlarged the farm and repaired the fencing of the Jones field, and the two fields were united by clearing and inclosing the few acres that lay between them. The farm now contained thirty acres, the soil of which was of good quality, and with proper cultivation would produce an excellent crop of grain and vegetables. The produce of that amount of land, it was believed, would be amply sufficient for our large family, especially as we kept no stock, except a span of horses and a yoke or two of strong cattle, We did not attempt to produce wheat; first, because there were no flouring mills in the country; and in the second place, because the land was not adapted to the growth of wheat, having scarcely a particle of lime in the soil. Indian corn, sweet potatoes, yams, pumpkins, squashes, tomatoes, melons, peas, and beans were produced with facility and in great abundance.

It may be proper to mention the appointments for preaching, since the session of the conference. We formed a regular circuit, and determined to do the work of itinerant preachers. The principal preaching-places were Fort Coffee, New Hope, Pheasant

Bluffs, Council-Ground, and Mrs. James's, on the south fork of the Poteau. Besides these Mr. P. was in the habit of preaching at the cabins, wherever he could succeed in collecting a few to hear the word.

Mr. G. had the charge of the work, and was faithful. Mr. P. was diligent and almost constantly on his circuit. He usually preached in the native tongue, but could express himself readily and correctly in English.

As his Biblical and theological researches were in English, he found it more convenient to preach in that language, yet his sentences were wanting in connecting words. In the Indian dialects there are no articles, prepositions, or conjunctions; the particles which give force and finish to our composition, were wholly wanting in their language.

H. C. Benson was not required to travel regularly around the circuit, for, having the immediate charge of the school and Sunday school, he could not be absent. Hence he only attended such appointments as were sufficiently near to be reached in the morning in time for service. But during the vacations he was at liberty to visit any point, and do his part of the work of a traveling preacher.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ACADEMY OPENED.

On the ninth day of February, 1844, the school opened with six students from the Pushmataha district; they presented certificates of appointment signed by J. Folsom, chief, and S. Jones, Trustee. On the following day a number of pupils came from the Puckchenubbee district with certificates signed by James Fletcher, chief, and P. P. Pitchlynn, Trustee; also from the Moshulatubbee district, with certificates from Nat Folsom, chief, and Thomson M'Kenny, Trustee.

In a few days we had received thirty pupils into the school to be clothed, fed, and taught. In addition to these we had consented to teach all the *day scholars* who should choose to come, boarding at home and being clothed by their friends. There were only a few who availed themselves of this privilege.

The lads came in dressed in the prevailing fashions, having generally shirts, pants, and calico hunting-shirts; a few had shoes or moccasins, but the majority came with the feet bare. Not more than two or three wore hats; the balance were either entirely bareheaded or had a cotton handkerchief twisted around the head, making a sort of turban. According to Indian taste they all had long hair, and a few of them wore it braided.

Our first work after their arrival was to wash and clothe them; we had entire suits prepared in advance for them. The coat and pants were of Kentucky jeans; good stout shoes, seal-skin caps, white shirts of stout cloth, and cotton handkerchiefs completed the outfit. We had a tub of water for ablutions; then Mr. P., armed with stout shears, soon reduced their hair to our notions of taste and comfort. They generally submitted to our requirements without a murmur, but occasionally one would reluctantly consent to be shorn of his locks. The next step was to make a proper fit of clothing. With their new suits they were much gratified, and in coming out of the dressing-room they were so changed that their friends could scarcely recognize them.

One little fellow, about eight years old, had come a distance of a hundred and twenty miles, dressed in drilling pants, check shirt, and calico hunting-shirt, but destitute of hat and shoes. When dressed warmly and neatly, in new clothing, he manifested great delight with his improved circumstances; but, just in the dusk of the evening, he was seen standing behind the dining-room weeping most bitterly. When asked, through an interpreter, the cause of his trouble, he replied that he "had good pants, good jacket, good shoes and cap, and was much glad, but he had no blanket to wrap himself in, and thought that lying upon the ground without a blanket he would be cold."

We took him into the dormitories and explained to him the mysteries of a bedstead, with its mattress, pillows, sheets, and blankets; and, pointing to the particular one upon which he should sleep, we left him, with his eyes sparkling and his face beaming with happiness. He had never before conceived the idea of any better sleeping arrangements than the earth and a blanket could afford.

When we came to register the names of the lads we found a number who had none but Indian names, many of which were lengthy and difficult to remember. To such English names were given, but, whenever it could be done, the Indian name was retained and used as a surname. In one instance a lad came with a short Indian name—"*Belah*"—which we thought would do, and, hence, did not give him any other; but he was not satisfied, and in a few days came and requested us to give him an English name, which was accordingly done.

When we came to assign lessons in the school-room we found that not more than six or eight of the scholars knew the alphabet; two or three could spell in one and two syllables. The school-room was furnished with blackboards, upon which we taught the alphabet in classes. Our method was to form two or three letters upon the board, and then pronounce them, having the school so arranged that all could see; then we would have the school to pronounce the letters. We would then have a portion of the class to go and take the chalk and write the letters, and then another portion of the class, and thus continue till all had learned both to speak and write the entire alphabet. The exercise was full of interest to the lads, and very soon all the pupils could write and pronounce the alphabet with facility. The first lessons in forming letters into syllables and syllables into words were also taught upon the blackboard. In teaching the elementary studies we found the board and a piece of chalk to be much more useful than the old-fashioned cards and primers; that method was of special service in teaching them to pronounce words correctly. The Indians learn to write with great facility; they are very apt at imitation and active with their fingers. Of course we did not wholly dispense with the elementary spelling-books and readers.

INCIDENT.

In traveling around his circuit Mr. Page frequently collected a few natives at a shanty, and preached to them in a plain and simple style, which they could easily comprehend. He never failed to urge the necessity of a change of heart and life as a qualification to enter heaven. In a recent tour he called at a cabin where he had preached two or three times on previous occasions. A little daughter, not more than four years of age, recognized him, and addressed him as follows:

"Are you the heaven-talker?"

"Yes," said Page, "I am a preacher."

"Will you heaven-talk *now?*"

"No, not now," said Page.

"Will you *heaven-talk* after we eat supper?"

"Yes, I will preach after supper. Do you love such *talk?*"

"Yes," said the child, "I do; for it will make our hearts good and then take us up to live with God in heaven."

That little daughter had never been taught the truths of revelation; her parents were not pious and wholly destitute of education, not even speaking a word of English. The child had learned the first lessons of Divine truth from the lips of the minister of the Gospel, and in listening to the word on two or three occasions only she had grasped the great and essential doctrines of practical religion.

In the humble hovel of the rude denizens of the forest there are many bright intellects that eagerly search for living truth, and the messenger of Christ, with the Divine blessing, will gather many of them into the fold of the good Shepherd—jewels that shall bedeck the crown of the Savior.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ACADEMY—DAILY DUTIES.

THE plat of ground inclosed by our buildings was rectangular, the sides of which were one hundred feet in length. In the center of this square a post or column was firmly planted, upon the upper end of which a bell was hung. In the winter season the bell was rung at five o'clock, and in the summer at sunrise, as the signal for rising. In one hour after the first bell the second bell was rung as the signal for assembling in the chapel for family worship, which consisted of the reading of the Scriptures, singing, and prayer. From the chapel we went directly to the dining-room for breakfast. Immediately after breakfast all the pupils were taken to the fields or woods, and kept at manual labor till half-past eight o'clock; they were always in the care of one of the teachers. At nine o'clock the exercises in the school-room commenced; the session continued till twelve, at which time we had an intermission of one hour for dinner and recreation. The afternoon session continued till four o'clock; at half-past four the pupils again engaged in manual labor till within a half hour of sunset. In the winter season, when the days were short, the school did not open till half-past nine in the morning, and was dismissed at half-past three in the afternoon.

At the ring of the bell we met in the chapel for prayers at sunset in the evening, after which we had supper. The students were encouraged to read of evenings, but were not required to devote any of the time to study; they devoted an hour or two each evening to exercise and sports of various kinds in the open air. At nine o'clock in the evening a tap of the bell was the signal for retiring, and in thirty minutes all were required to be in bed, with their lights extinguished; at ten o'clock one of the teachers invariably visited all the rooms to see that all the lads were in their appropriate places, and that the fires were all secure. Each student had his bed assigned to him, and no one was suffered to make a change without special permission.

On Saturday we had neither school exercises nor regular duties at the labor of the farm. The morning was spent in cleaning the yards and grounds of any litter and rubbish that might have accumulated during the week; the afternoon was devoted to amusements under healthful restrictions. No students were permitted to go far from the mission without special consent being first obtained. Fishing and bathing in the river in the spring and summer were favorite recreations. Gathering berries and nuts in their season was a delightful occupation; shooting with bows and arrows and ball-playing were engaged in by all. At four o'clock, on Saturday afternoon, we assembled all the lads at the school-room to distribute their Sunday clothing. The lads had each a particular *number* by which he was known, and all his garments were marked with his particular number. By this method each lad always wore the same garments, and, as all received new suits at the same time, an inducement was thus presented to each to be careful to preserve his clothing.

On Sunday morning, at nine o'clock, we met for Sunday school; also at three in the afternoon for one hour only. In the Sunday school we had all who were sufficiently advanced to read the New Testament. A considerable time was spent in singing, an exercise of which the Indians are exceedingly fond; their voices are musical and they learn to sing readily.

The ages of the students range from eight years to twenty, yet our rules were uniform, requiring strict and unqualified obedience from all. We found the young men ready to obey without any reluctance or exhibition of special obstinacy.

Our authority was recognized and duly respected on all occasions. There were a few instances of delinquency and violations of rule, but not one case of rebellion or insubordination. We had daily and regular hours for manual labor; and although the lads did not take hold voluntarily, yet when directed to do so, they never refused. They would use the ax, hoe, rake, maul, and grubbing-hoe to good purpose. Many of them would handle oxen and horses at plowing, harrowing, and carting, with good judgment. A few would handle carpenter's tools with skill and ingenuity, showing an aptness and talent for mechanical pursuits.

They were kind and obliging in their mutual intercourse, whether at business or amusements; yet were occasionally so rude and careless as to inflict wounds and bruises upon each other, but without malice or ill-feeling. We found it necessary to take the supervision of their sports; to restrict the use of the bow and arrow; and, in positive terms, to forbid the practice of throwing sticks, pebbles, and stones at one another. A single violation of this rule soon brought a case of discipline before the school. The charge was direct and facts clear and undisputed. Robert Frazier had thrown a pebble, which struck Sam Magee on the cheek just below the eye. There was considerable contusion and swelling of the face. Sam was a little fellow not more than ten years old, while Robert was eighteen and well grown.

The school was called to order while the investigation should take place; and the accused was called forward to answer to the charge. "Well, Robert, what have you to say? Did you throw the stone which struck Sam in the face?" "Yes," said R., "I flinged it." "Did you aim to hit him when you threw the stone?" "Yes," said he, "I wants to hit him, but no wants to hurt his face." "But did you not know that it was a violation of our rules to throw at each other?" He replied, "Yes, I knows it." "Did you not know that it was *wrong* to throw a stone at a little fellow like Sam?" Robert was silent. "Now, what ought to be done? What shall I do with you for breaking our rules?" He replied without a moment's hesitation, "I must be whipped." The appeal was then made to the entire school, "What shall be done with Robert for violating the rules of the school?" They responded, without a dissenting voice, "He must be whipped!" As the rule was well understood, and as there was a confession of guilt, and as the *jury* were unanimous in their verdict, we felt it to be necessary to inflict the penalty. The rod was accordingly applied with considerable energy, but it was patiently borne, and Robert loved and respected us none the less for the promptness with which we maintained the authority of the school government.

The smaller boys were passionately fond of marbles; and although their games were innocent, still we could not consent that they should engage in such amusements. Playing on the ground, in a single day they would soil their clothes to such an extent as to render themselves unfit to come to the table or to sleep in their beds. We finally interdicted the marble-playing altogether; but the little fellows were not inclined to yield; they would keep a sentinel to watch that no teacher should come upon them and surprise them in the midst of their games. It soon occurred, however, that the sentinel became himself deeply interested as to the result of a closely-contested game, and they were caught by one of the teachers. Allen was stooping at the ring as the teacher came up in the rear and seized him by the collar, and gave him a drubbing, which was borne with the ccurage of a martyr. But when the teacher looked for Sam, the other offender, he had vanished from sight. But after a little search he was found behind a pillar under the porch; he was dragged forth to receive his portion of the merited punishment. The marbles were abandoned from that eventful period.

CHAPTER XXIX.

FLOODS.

It will be remembered that, during the spring of 1844, unprecedented floods prevailed in the southwest. The rivers west of the Mississippi all overflowed their banks, inundating all the low lands adjacent. The Arkansas and Red rivers had never been known to be so high. Having their sources in the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains, and having numerous and lengthy tributaries, the continuous rains and the melting of the immense quantities of snow in the mountains, caused vast torrents of water to pour down the gorges and flood the channel of each stream. And as the rains continued to fall, with but little intermission for seven weeks, the rivers overflowed their banks, inundating the low lands, and proving fearfully destructive of the improvements and growing crops in the bottoms. Such rains for so long a period we had never before witnessed. The forest-trees literally bent beneath the weight of their luxuriant growth of foliage.

At Fort Coffee the river rose forty-four feet above low-water mark; but still we were secure, as it yet required an additional rise of twenty-one feet to reach the top of the rocky cliff. But on the opposite side of the river, where the bank was not so high, the country was inundated for miles. Vast numbers of cottonwood-trees were uprooted by the floods, and carried down the current to the imminent peril of the steamboats on the river, one of which was wrecked and sunk with all its cargo an entire loss. On Red river the damage was much greater than on the Arkansas. Here, the banks being low, the floods swept over the plains to the utter destruction of the growing crops of grain and cotton, together with the large herds of horses and cattle that were unable to escape the deluge. Whole farms were inundated, and many families were reported to have perished. Some fled to trees, upon whose branches they sought a temporary refuge from the desolations of the flood. In some instances steamboats would quit the channel of the river, and go to the rescue of those who were in peril. It sometimes occurred that horses and other domestic animals would swim to the boats, and exert themselves to leap upon the guards, to save themselves from perishing. And to prevent them from sinking the boats the crew were under the necessity of beating off the poor creatures till their strength would become exhausted and would sink to the bottom.

During the time of the flood Rev. Wesley Browning, of the Missouri conference, came to Fort Coffee, en route for the seat of the Nunnewaya Academy, on the Kiamichi river. The institution was to be located at the base of a small mountain of the Ozark range. *Nun-ne-wa-ya* signifies "bending mountain." Mr. Browning had been appointed Superintendent of the

Academy and was on his way to the place of its location.

Mr. Browning had once been a prominent member of the Ohio conference, and had been once stationed in Cincinnati. Afterward he was a member of the Pittsburg conference, and was the presiding elder who officially signed the first license given to M. Simpson—now Bishop—to exercise his gifts as a preacher in accordance with the doctrines and usages of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He was transferred from the Pittsburg to the Missouri conference, and placed at the head of the Indian manual-labor school in the Shawnee tribe, in the vicinity of Fort Leavenworth. Afterward he was presiding elder of the St. Louis district, and, finally, he had been appointed to the work of establishing a seminary in the southern part of the Choctaw nation.

He had come as far as our mission, but could proceed no further; the creeks and rivers were still impassable and the rains were still falling in copious abundance. After waiting five weeks for the floods to abate he became discouraged and returned to St. Louis. The Indians were dissatisfied because nothing was done; the Agent himself thought there was a lack of energy, and the result was the appropriations were withdrawn and directed into a different channel.

Of Mr. Browning's talents and character as a minister too much can not be said. The ten discourses we heard him preach at Fort Coffee were of a very superior style; they were among the best we ever had the privilege to hear.

The floods did not begin to recede till the first of June, and heavy rains were frequent till the beginning of July. With such excessive freshets, so late in the season, we apprehended an unusual amount of violent bilious sickness during the autumn. The marshes and lagoons were overflowing at midsummer, and the intense heat must soon render those pools stagnant and putrid, and, hence, the atmosphere must be loaded with *malaria* of the most noxious character. The unparalleled rains had added materially to the crop of grass upon the gravelly prairies and hill-sides; the grazing lands every-where resembled rich meadows, and the herds of cattle and horses were in the most thrifty condition.

As the waters began to abàte we found the river abounding with fish of excellent quality. Having a little leisure, one Saturday afternoon, I took a rod, hook, and line and went down to the river for amusement. An ounce of fresh beef served as "bait" upon the hook, which was cast out into the deep water. In a few minutes there was a "bite"—not a "nibble" but a veritable *bite*, such as would have thrilled the soul of an amateur angler. It required some patience and ingenuity to bring the fish to land and secure him; his weight upon the scales was twenty-five pounds and four ounces. But, just as I had deposited the prize at the threshold of the kitchen, Sam and Allen, two of our smallest Indian boys, came up the hill with a huge catfish suspended from a pole borne upon their shoulders, while the tail of the fish was trailing in the dust. They had caught their prize at the boat-landing; it weighed a fraction over fifty-four pounds. The two were equal in amount to a medium-sized venison, and were fat and well-flavored. There were no small fishes in the Arkansas, as the large ones, being voracious, either consumed or drove out the small ones; the least one caught at our mission weighed over twelve pounds.

CHAPTER XXX.

INDIAN LADS BECOMING PIOUS—SESSION CLOSES—VACATION.

During the latter part of the winter and in the spring many of the students became deeply serious, manifesting an increasing interest in the services of religion; they were very eager to read and understand the teachings of the New Testament. Mr. Page would converse, sing, and pray with them in their own language. His services were of incalculable value, very far surpassing those of an ordinary interpreter; for he was himself a minister with a good understanding of the saving truths of the Gospel. If we failed to present the truth in terms suited to their but partially-enlightened minds he could give the necessary explanation and answer all the questions propounded by them. We had not yet admitted any of them to membership, although we were led to hope and trust that there was a genuine work of grace in the hearts of a few of them. In the absence of Mr. Page they commenced to have prayers in their own rooms, and, finally, to take a part in our Thursday evening prayer meetings, taking up the cross voluntarily and praying in the native language. After watching them closely, and conversing with them, it was thought proper to admit six of them to membership; the ordinance of baptism was administered to them by Rev. W. H. Goode, and they were permitted to partake of the sacrament of the Lord's supper.

It had been arranged by the joint Board of chiefs and Trustees that the schools should be taught ten months, at the end of which term there should be a vacation of two months. It was agreed that the session should commence on the first day of October and close with the last of July; the lads should then have permission to go home and spend the vacation with their friends. As our first session was about to close we gave an invitation to the chiefs, Trustees, distinguished men, and the parents of the lads to come and witness a public examination of the classes. Major Armstrong, the Agent, Wm. Riddle, the United States Interpreter, and two of the Trustees, together with a number of the parents, were present. Nearly all the lads had learned to read, a majority were beginning to write, and all had made considerable proficiency. The friends were much gratified with the advancement made, and the Agent and Trustees gave an unqualified approbation of what had been accomplished.

Our cook had prepared a good dinner for all our guests, which made a very favorable impression upon the minds of our Indian visitors, who have a high appreciation of a well-spread table. All left in excellent humor, giving us the cordial shake of the hand as they departed. There were three students who were orphans, and, having no friends to visit, they asked permission to remain with us during the vacation, which was readily granted.

We felt deeply solicitous for the lads as they returned to their homes, where the influences might serve to dissipate or neutralize all the good impressions which had been made upon their hearts; we were especially anxious in regard to those who had professed conversion.

We now had a season of rest from the labors and cares of teaching and looking after so large a family. August was excessively warm, dry, and sultry, the thermometer ranging from ninety-eight to one hundred and three degrees in the shade. Having no heavy outdoor labor to perform we prudently kept in the shade during the heat of the day, occasionally refreshing the outer man with a comfortable *siesta* after dinner.

Mrs. B. and myself, having a special invitation, made a visit to Massard, where we spent two Sabbaths and the intervening week. We had two services each Sunday, and received four persons into the Church on probation.

While spending a day at the residence of Mr. G. I was requested to admonish and reprove his servant woman, who had become somewhat disrespectful to her mistress. At first I declined saying a word to her, not having any experience in negro discipline, and but little relish for or sympathy with the "peculiar institution." "But," said Mr. G., "I never whip my servant whatever her conduct may be. Minerva is generally an obedient and faithful girl, but of late she is growing saucy; and, as you are the *parson*, and received her into the Church, she will hear you and will do whatever you direct." If Minerva would become truly pious and conscientious she would then be respectful and obedient and altogether a better slave; and so I went to the kitchen to quote the apostle's language to the poor *bondwoman*, "Servants, be obedient unto your own masters." I endeavored to enforce patience and obedience from the teachings of God's word; it was my first and only effort in that particular department of missionary labor.

Before leaving I made inquiry of Mr. G., "Has your servant, Minerva, a husband?"

"No," said he, "she has not."

"Has she never been married?"

"Well, yes; she took up with Mr. S.'s man, Pete, and called him her husband for a year or two; and I treated him well, giving him the privilege of the yard and kitchen on Saturday nights and Sundays, but the impudent nigger got too lazy to cut the wood and make the fires, and so I caned him off of the premises and told him never to return."

"How long is it, Mr. G., since Pete has visited Minerva?"

"About two years," was the reply.

Here was a precious specimen of the practical workings of the "peculiar institution." Mr. G., his wife, and his slave were all members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and Pete's mistress was also a member of the same Church. With the consent of owners Pete and Minerva had become husband and wife, a relation which had been recognized by all the parties; but, after the lapse of two or three years, as Minerva was not blessed with any *progeny*, Mr. G. concluded that it was not profitable to give Pete his Sunday board; so he drove him from his premises, upon the pretext that the "nigger was saucy and lazy!" Thus the marriage tie was sundered by the master, who received no censure from the Church; all the parties were still regarded as good Christians, meeting regularly together at the Lord's table.

Late in the month of August I went to assist in a meeting held a short distance east of Fort Smith. The services were held in a school-house, and was designed mainly for the benefit of the colored population. It was numerously attended on Saturday evening and Sunday by the slaves of the neighborhood. They manifested a deep interest in the preaching, were very prompt in their responses; but the hearty and unctuous amen was sometimes given in the wrong place.

On Sunday afternoon a number of them came to be baptized, nearly all of them preferring to be immersed. As they came forward for examination, each one would present a paper containing the master's consent for the slave to receive the ordinance. Without such note of permission we could not safely administer the ordinance to any of them. One paper read as follows:

"DEAR SIR,—Joe wishes to be *dipped;* he thinks it will make him a better *boy.* I have no objection to the experiment.

"Yours, J. B.

"*Van Buren, Arkansas, August* —."

Returning to Fort Coffee, on the following Saturday I went in company with Mr. Goode to an appointment at the residence of Mrs. James on the south fork of the Poteau. The congregation numbered about thirty, the most of them belonging to the family of Mrs. James—her children and servants.

Mrs. J. was a Chickasaw woman, about fifty years of age, with a family of grown-up sons and daughters, the most of whom were married and residing in the immediate vicinity of the mother. She was a widow of good character, and in comfortable circumstances. And though she understood the most that we said, yet she declined conversing in the English language. One of her sons served as interpreter in the conversation we had with her. Her children were all educated to some extent, and conversed readily in English.

Mrs. J. was a Christian woman, and manifested a lively interest in the success of the mission and the school. She visited us at Fort Coffee repeatedly, but could not place any of her children in the Academy;

for being Chickasaws they had no privileges in the schools founded and sustained by Choctaw annuities. She had a nephew in the Academy, who was a sprightly and promising youth, whose father was a Choctaw and his mother a Chickasaw.

It is proper to mention that the Chickasaws, although an integral portion of the Choctaw nation, still retained the right to manage their own local interests, of which their schools, elections, and courts were the most important. They were rich in annuities.

CHAPTER XXXI.

QUAPAWS.

On the fourth day of September two Indians, a man and his wife, came to Fort Coffee, to seek admission into the school. They were, according to their statement, Quapaws, and belonged to a remnant of a once numerous tribe, residing near the south-west corner of Missouri, in the vicinity of a mixed tribe of Senecas and Shawnees. The Quapaws then only numbered a fraction over three hundred souls. The Rev. S. G. Patterson, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, had been laboring with them as a missionary for several years.

The Quapaw's name was Villiers, and his wife was sister of the chief then in power and the daughter of the old chief. Villiers professed to be a Christian, and a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He believed himself called to the work of the ministry, and had come to our mission to improve his education and qualify himself for greater usefulness. He stated that, before leaving his tribe, he had procured a letter of recommendation from Colonel Barker, the United States Agent; also one from Mr. Patterson, the missionary, which was also signed by Rev. D. B. Cumming, the presiding elder of the district.

The letters were addressed to Mr. Goode, but having been robbed on the way he had lost his papers. They had left their home, traveled across the country to the Neosho and there purchased a canoe, in which to descend the river to its junction with the Arkansas, and so on down to Fort Coffee. They had laid in a supply of provisions, had their blankets, a trunk of clothing, a rifle-gun, a few cooking vessels, and a few dollars of money. Their plan had been to guide the canoe all day, letting it float with the current, and when night came they would fasten their craft, light a fire, prepare their food, and then wrap themselves in their blankets and sleep till morning.

The night before reaching our mission they had tied up and camped on the Cherokee side of the river; but when they waked up in the morning they discovered that their canoe, trunk, provisions, money, and papers were all gone. They were robbed of all their earthly treasures, and being thus left on the bank of the river in utter destitution, they knew not what to do; but finally came on foot, and gave us a history of their troubles. The story was plausible; Villiers was frank and candid, so far as we could discover; and after a pretty thorough examination, we pronounced him worthy of belief.

He also stated that a year before that time he had taken the life of one of his tribe, but that he had done it in self-defense. He disclaimed being a murderer; had not shed the blood of his fellow in malice or with any murderous intent; and when his deed had been examined into by the proper authorities they fully justified him in what he had done. Still he had enemies, and as he did not wish to be drawn into another serious difficulty, he had determined for a time to forsake his people. He was exceedingly anxious to remain at Fort Coffee, proposing that both himself and wife would labor as servants to defray their expenses. But his request could not be granted; we had no power to bestow favors, or to receive any pupils, except those placed under our care by the chiefs and district Trustees.

Villiers was a bright and fine-looking man, about twenty-five years old; his wife, too, was an interesting native, with good features and pleasant manners; she was not unworthy of her royal descent. After remaining a day or two to rest and refresh themselves, we furnished them with as much provisions as they could carry, gave Villiers a little money, and his wife a pair of stout shoes to protect her feet; and on the morning of the sixth they crossed the Arkansas, and set out upon their journey across the Cherokee nation for their own tribe.

We never again saw them, but learned through Mr. Patterson, the Quapaw missionary, that their statements were truthful; that he was, indeed, an honest, good man, and preparing for the work of the Christian ministry.

I do not remember to have seen any other Quapaw, but if V. was a fair specimen, they must be regarded as a very superior class of Indians.

The Quapaws are believed to be a branch of the

Dacotah stock of Indians; they are a remnant, and the only one, of the *Arkansa* tribe.

A word of explanation with regard to that word, so differently pronounced and so imperfectly understood. *Arkansas* is neither Spanish nor French, but Indian. The original word should be spelled *Arkansah*. It is very improperly written in the plural form. We have adopted the French pronunciation, which would be correct if the final letter were omitted.

CHAPTER XXXII.

PARRICIDE—SUICIDE—HOMICIDE.

A GRAND ball-play recently came off at Ayakni Achukma, at which some avaricious and unprincipled trader succeeded in smuggling whisky into the camp. Soon after the liquor was distributed the excitement became wild, intense, and irrepressible; the play was summarily closed, and a general bacchanalian carousal and debauch were the results. While the whisky lasted the drunken revelry was kept up, each one contributing his part in the disgusting orgies. At length, having exhausted the supply of liquid fire, they struck their camps and dispersed, each in the direction of his own neighborhood and cabin.

Cornelius Macann and family, who were our near neighbors, had to perform a journey of thirty miles to reach home; as they could not do this in one afternoon, they were forced to camp and take one "sleep" by the roadside. Macann was about fifty years old; his wife was much younger, and his son Jim, by a former wife, was perhaps twenty-five years old. The old gentleman was a little more under the influence of liquor than his wife, and she assumed the responsibility of taking the jug into her own possession. Camping by the side of their trail, Macann was very stupid and almost consumed by thirst; his wife kept the jug concealed and would not give him the coveted *oko-ho-ma*—whisky. He complained bitterly of his wife's unkind treatment, but finally lay down by the camp-fire and went into a drunken sleep. At a late hour Jim Macann, the son, rode up to the camp, whereupon Mrs. Macann immediately brought out the jug to treat Jim. The old man again begged for whisky to quench his thirst, which was about to consume him, but his request was not regarded; again he lay down and went to sleep. Mrs. Macann and Jim held a short conference, and then proceeded to murder the husband and father. The fiendish deed was accomplished by the son, in the presence of the wife, with a stout cudgel three feet long; he literally broke the father's head, and left his lifeless and mangled corpse lying by the camp-fire. There had been no provocation; the act was cool, deliberate, premeditated, and murderous. It was believed that the wife's object was to get rid of her husband, that she might secure a younger and more sprightly companion. The son, who was a fast young man, with a strong disgust for manual labor, wished to get possession of his father's property, which consisted of a good stock of cattle and horses.

The entire community seemed shocked at the horrible and unnatural crime of the murder, and forthwith the light-horsemen arrested Jim and brought him before the proper tribunal to answer to the charge of murder in the first degree. The investigation was prosecuted with promptness; he was found guilty and sentenced to be shot. Jim succeeded, however, in obtaining a new trial, which was set for an early day; but there was no prison in which to confine him, and, before the time arrived in which the investigation was to be made, he absconded, and was next heard of in the "old nation," east of the Mississippi, a thousand miles distant.

Their method and forms in the prosecution of criminals were of a primitive character. If a man was charged with crime it became the duty of the light-horsemen to notify the accused to appear before the court, upon a set day, for trial; but during the interval the culprit went free. If a full-blooded Indian they had the fullest confidence that he would come voluntarily to the bar and meet courageously the impending decision; as his honor and bravery were involved no one feared that he would secrete himself or fly to escape sentence of the law. To be regarded as a coward was a doom more fearful, a thousand-fold, than death itself; he is altogether too brave to shun a judicial investigation; he is not afraid to die, but ready to face death with boldness. But half-breed Indians were not to be trusted; they were almost as mean and cowardly as white men themselves; they were alike destitute of honor and courage. Jim Macann was a half-breed; he was "no brave," and, hence, to save his unworthy life, fled from his tribe that he might obtain a refuge in a distant land.

A SUICIDE.

A circumstance transpired in the vicinity of our mission, during the first session of the Academy, which will serve to illustrate a marked trait of Choctaw character. They cherished a strong disgust for all connections and amalgamations with the colored people. It was death, according to their laws, for one of the tribe to marry a negro or mulatto; all such intercourse was regarded with inexpressible loathing, and yet there were occasional intermixtures of the blood of the Indian and African races.

We had received into the Academy, as a day scholar, a lad whose name was Isaac M'Kee, about fourteen years of age, who might have claimed relationship with the Anglo-Saxon, the African, and the Indian races. His father was said to have been a chief, and his mother a bright mulatto slave, who had served her master in the capacity of housekeeper. But Isaac knew nothing of his parents; for his father had died during his infancy, and his mother had been sold to another master. He seemed to be entirely ignorant of the African taint in his blood, and regarded himself as pure Choctaw. He had been in the school but a short time when one of his play-fellows became angry and taunted "Ike" with being a "nigger;" but Isaac resented the insult with becoming indignation. But, when he had time to reflect coolly upon the subject, he was forced to admit that his complexion was peculiar and his hair curled, which was, indeed, remarkable, and hitherto unknown among Indians of unadulterated blood.

His home was in the family of William Riddle, the United States Interpreter, and, as he was exceedingly anxious to know the truth with regard to his parentage and race, he went to Mr. Riddle and frankly stated what the lads at the school had said. "Captain," said he, "I wish to know the truth; is it so? am I a nigger?" Mr. Riddle replied: "Isaac, I have seen your parents. Your father lived on Red river, and was once a chief; he was an honorable man, and died when you were an infant. Your mother was a servant—a mulatto, a beautiful woman, of excellent character." But Isaac waited to hear no more; he was gone.

In about an hour after the conversation had taken place the Captain heard the report of a gun in the bushes near by, and, wishing to know who had fired the piece, he went to the spot, and was shocked to find Isaac M'Kee weltering in his own gore. He had regarded a life of degradation as more intolerable than death itself; he could not endure the odium which he believed attached to the word *negro*. This was the only case of *suicide* that came under our observation. We never knew a case of *insanity* or *idiocy* in any of the tribes; we heard of no such persons.

HOMICIDE.

In the latter part of September Lewis Calvin was shot by the light-horsemen at the council-ground.

Calvin was the brother-in-law of Jim Macann, and had been much enraged at the light-horsemen for their promptness in arresting Jim and bringing him to trial. He had sworn that he would wreak his vengeance upon Captain Riddle; this threat was made in the presence of one of Riddle's friends. Calvin had been seen in the bushes, near the Captain's residence, with his rifle in hand, and, when challenged, he boldly declared that his object was to kill Riddle. Thus matters stood for a number of weeks. Calvin's deadly hostility could not be overcome, although he knew full well that Riddle's acts had been official and not characterized by personal animosity.

They met for the first time after the difficulty at Ayakni Achukma, when Riddle, T. Walls, T. M'Kenny, and C. James, all light-horsemen, approached Calvin and Lewis Macann, and asked if it was true that he—Calvin—had sworn vengeance against the light-horsemen, and against himself—Riddle—in particular? Calvin said it was true, and that his purpose was to kill every man of them, commencing with Riddle. The light-horsemen then simultaneously fired upon Calvin and Lewis Macann, killing them instantly.

The deed was violent and much to be regretted, and yet there seemed to be no remedy less cruel and bloody. They had only acted in their official capacity in the act which gave mortal offense, and then, to protect their lives, they were forced to destroy those who had sworn vengeance against them. They immediately surrendered themselves to the authorities, and demanded an investigation, which resulted in their acquittal; the authorities fully justified them in the deed. A man who deliberately and persistently threatens murder is considered an outlaw and treated accordingly.

But, after this unhappy occurrence, Captain Riddle became gloomy and wretched; he reflected on himself, regretting that he had killed Calvin. He was sad and greatly depressed in spirit, and remarked to a friend, "I never before shed blood; I am not a murderer, had no malice in my heart against Calvin. I wish I had not touched him, but had run the risk of being shot myself; I am now so wretched that I would rather die than live!"

Some months after that event Mr. Riddle's business called him into the southern part of the tribe; and, while in the vicinity of Fort Towson, he had an attack of toothache and neuralgia in the face. The surgeon at the Fort was called to see him, extracted the decayed tooth, and gave him medicine, not regarding the symptoms by any means alarming. Mr. Goode, being in that part of the nation, called to see Riddle, but did not think him seriously ill. He did not improve, however, but, gradually declining, in a few days died, apparently from mental rather than physical sufferings. He was a national loss—a good, honest, patriotic, and capable officer whom the tribe could not well spare. We knew no Choctaw for whom we felt greater respect than for William Riddle, the United States Interpreter and captain of the light-horsemen, or marshals, of his district. His son, Philip, was in the Academy—a fine, sprightly lad of twelve years of age—and, when we left that country, was making fine progress in his studies; he was an unusually-promising youth.

CHAPTER XXXII.

FORT COFFEE ACADEMY—SECOND YEAR.

On the first day of October, 1844, the second session of the Academy opened with about thirty students in attendance, a few not having yet returned. Mr. Brigham was employed as an assistant teacher. He was an Irishman, having been born and educated in the city of Dublin, and was, by profession, a druggist. His education was good; he was intelligent and gentlemanly and had once been a member of the Presbyterian Church.

Our school was full, not one of the old pupils failing to return. They manifested very great pleasure at meeting us and in getting back to the regular round of school duties. A few of the lads were accompanied by friends, fathers or brothers, mounted on their ponies, while not a few had walked, carrying their provisions and camping by the roadside at night. The friends who came as visitors all remained several days, resting themselves and horses, and witnessing the mysteries of the school-room.

Indians are seldom in haste, and never in a hurry to quit a place where grazing is abundant and provisions ample and free. We encouraged them to remain sufficiently long to become favorably impressed with the Academy and so carry back a good report of the institution. Every man who came into the recitation-room took occasion to make a speech to the lads; they, no doubt, gave much sage counsel, the purport of which we could not quite comprehend with our imperfect knowledge of their language. But, at the termination of each address, the boys gave the accustomed response, "Yes, it is well!" and it became necessary for one of the students to address the visitors in "a neat little speech." We had almost as much ceremony as we have sometimes witnessed when an ex-President of the United States or a member of Congress has visited the frontiers just upon the eve of an important election.

The Choctaws seemed to have a mania for shaking hands and making formal speeches. They were very pleasant orators; their words were soft, euphonious, and almost wholly free from aspirated guttural sounds. Their language was not copious: hence gesticulation became an important element in supplying the vacuum occasioned by the dearth of words. I have never seen orators more easy in manner or more graceful in action.

While those Indians remained with us as guests they required no special attention, were silent, walking about the grounds, or seated in the cool shade smoking; they were prompt, however, at the hours of eating, not failing to find the dining-room at the first bell; and at night they required no beds, as each was supplied with a blanket with which he wrapped himself and lay down upon the ground.

TEMPERANCE.

Near the close of the first session of the Academy we organized a temperance society, adopting the pledge of total abstinence from the use of all intoxicating drinks. Mr. Page aided us in explaining fully the object of the organization; he was chosen President, while the balance of the officers were selected from the students themselves. A constitution was written and presented, and an invitation given for all to come and take the pledge who would consent to do it voluntarily. The boys were encouraged to speak and act freely upon the subject, being assured that none would be required to sign the pledge or censured for not signing it. Speeches were made by them and quite an animated discussion was the result. When they had done speaking Mr. Page and myself went to the table and wrote our names; we were soon followed by at least one-half of the pupils in the school. There were a few that declined, with a significant shake of the head, remarking that "whisky much good on *pay-day* and at ball-play." After the organization was completed they met weekly for temperance discussions, and thus the society became a lyceum of considerable interest; nearly all had taken the pledge before the first session of the school closed.

Soon after the commencement of the second session we thought it proper to revive the temperance society, to keep up the interest in a subject of more importance to the Indian people than any other except the vital interest of Christianity. The meeting was opened in order, the constitution read, and persons invited forward to sign the pledge; a few went to the table to have their names recorded. Finally one young man arose and made a few remarks in the native tongue, and went forward and subscribed to the constitution and pledge. He was one of the old members, had been among the first to take the pledge, and had, indeed, been very active in the weekly meetings the preceding year. Thinking that the matter was not clearly understood we stated that we did not desire the *old members* to unite with the society, as they were already members, but the invitation was for new ones, such as had not taken the pledge the previous session; we invited only such. It was remarked, at the same time, that J. M. was a member of the society, having been among the first to unite with it at the period of its organization. D. F., the Secretary, then stated that "John's talk in Choctaw had explained the matter; when at home his friends had given him whisky and he had *spoiled the pledge!*" His confession was voluntary, and, as he was anxious to start anew, we directed the Secretary to erase John's name from the old record, and let him write it again upon the books. John was one of the six who first united with the Church, but, at the earliest opportunity after his return, without prompting, he came forward voluntarily to *rejoin* the Church, confessing, by the act, that he had justly forfeited his membership by drinking. We took his name and made a new record, erasing the old, quite willing to have all of the pupils know that the Church was a total-abstinence temperance organization. So far as I have been informed, J. M. never again faltered in his course; he remained firm and faithful as long as I knew him, and since that time has been licensed to preach, and employed as interpreter and assistant at one of the missions. He was only a half-breed; his father was a Frenchman, who was either dead or had left the nation.

INCIDENT.

Our arrangement was for Mr. Goode or myself to meet Mr. Page at New Hope and assist him in the services, whenever his appointment was to be at that place. One of us would preach a short discourse in English, when Mr. P. would follow in an exhortation in Choctaw; he would give the substance of the sermon, then close with prayer in the native language.

On one occasion I happened to be a few minutes behind time, and as the congregation was waiting, Mr. P. determined to conduct the services in English. He had read the Scriptures, sung, and prayed, and had just read his text as I entered; and as I gave him the signal to proceed he did so, preaching a plain, practical, and Scriptural discourse, just twelve minutes in length. The text was, "Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days what it is; that I may know how frail I am!" After taking his seat a few additional remarks were made upon the subject, after which the benediction was pronounced, the members remaining for class meeting. Having spoken to the brethren in order, Mr. P. was called upon to speak and close the services. He was peculiarly earnest, manifesting intense feeling, stating, in effect, that it should be the great business of his life to serve God and lay up treasure in heaven. "Now," said he, "I no want to be rich; I no want farm; I no want be chief; I no want big name; I wants religion—religion just suit me! I want to be Christian, and *full-blooded* Methodist." He was a full-blooded Indian, with no special love for half-breeds or mongrel races. He was a great admirer of bold, earnest, decided, and energetic men.

As we set out for Fort Coffee I spoke of the *brevity* of his sermon. "Brother P., why did you not prepare a longer sermon? It was not proper for you to sit down so soon, simply because I came in after you commenced." His eyes sparkled as he replied, "*You* no make me preach short; I preach all I had; I sit down 'cause I had no more; I not able to make more sermon!" If we would all learn to quit when we had no more *preach*, we should edify the people.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

INDIAN MISSION CONFERENCE—CHEROKEES—FAIRFIELD—PARK HILL.

ON Monday morning, October the fourth, *Revs.* W. H. Goode, John M. Steele, H. C. Benson, John Page, Oakchiah, and Chukmabbee set out on horseback for TAHLEQUAH, the Cherokee council-ground, where the session of our conference was to be held. As there was no road directly across the Cherokee nation from Fort Coffee, it was necessary to keep down the river on the southern side as far as Fort Smith. There we crossed the Arkansas and immediately entered the Cherokee country. Our purpose had been to take the military road leading to Fort Gibson; but after consultation, we determined to go by the way of the Fairfield mission, at which place we should be able to make the acquaintance of one of the old pioneer missionary families. Our course of travel was nearly north-west, through a region of country much more fertile and productive, and better supplied with timber than any we had previously seen in the south-west. All day long we were permitted to witness the varied evidences of Cherokee civilization. We saw many proofs of progress in their practical business operations and pursuits of life. There were occasional farms, with comfortable family dwellings, and with barns or chards, wagons, carts, plows, harrows, and other implements of husbandry—all giving indication of intelligence, thrift, enterprise, and comparative wealth. But in the immediate vicinity of those comfortable homesteads we would see the smoky hovel and the little irregular patch of corn and pumpkins; and every object we saw would indicate degradation and squalid poverty.

There did not seem to be an equal distribution of the comforts of life among the people. The contrasts and differences were more marked than among the Choctaws. The better classes were more refined and wealthy, while the lower classes were more destitute and thriftless. Perhaps nearly one-half of the Cherokee people are, more or less, crossed with the blood of the whites; some of those mixed breeds were either unable or unwilling to speak a word of our language. All the natives were dressed after the fashion of the whites on the frontiers, with the exception of a single garment—few of them wore hats upon their heads. It is the last article which an Indian will consent to adopt.

The Cherokees were evidently an agricultural people, giving less attention to stock growing than the Choctaws. We were gratified to see a good number of school-houses along the road. We occasionally heard the hum of little voices, and saw the teachers actively employed. The schools were mostly English, yet there was an occasional one in which the Cherokee books alone were used. Many grown-up men have learned to read intelligibly in the native dialect, who would never have acquired the English language. Pursuing our journey leisurely, and occasionally halting by the side of some spring or rivulet of pure cold water to refresh ourselves and horses, we did not arrive at the Fairfield mission till after dark. The family, having retired, we should have sought accommodations at a public house, if there had been one to which we could go.

Dr. Butler was the minister in charge of the station. He was a Presbyterian, had labored for a period of nineteen years with that people, having commenced his labors with them before they emigrated from the old nation in the state of Georgia. Himself and family had an experience in labor, in trial, and suffering, which language may not record, and for which there is no compensation on this side of heaven.

We found Dr. Butler sitting in an arm-chair, in a dark room, prepared to spend the night in that position. He was suffering with asthma to such an extent as to render it impossible for him to lie upon a bed and sleep in a recumbent position. For many successive nights he had been compelled to sit alone in his dark chamber while the hours were slowly passing.

At the ring of the bell we were admitted, with a brotherly and Christian cordiality that was truly grateful to our hearts at the end of our day's journey. Mrs. B., being indisposed, did not rise; but Miss Smith, the teacher of the Mission school, and two fine Cherokee misses, who were about fourteen years of age, came, and in a few minutes prepared us a substantial tea.

We were impressed with the good sense and economy which characterized, as far as we could discover, the entire establishment. There were no servants; Mrs. B., Miss Smith, and six Cherokee girls, who had been received into the family, did the kitchen and chamber work. The girls were not treated as servants, but daughters; they were neat, intelligent, and sufficiently comely to pass reputably in any society. The furniture of the mission was very plain, and yet comfortable; while the table was destitute of every article that might be considered a luxury, yet the food was good, substantial, and of sufficient variety.

The family worship was orderly and remarkably interesting. Each member of the family was supplied with a Bible and hymn-book; and they also had books to be used by strangers who should chance to worship at their altar. Dr. B. commenced the reading—each one reading his verse in turn "from the greatest down to the least." The hymn was announced, and sung by all; after which we kneeled, and Rev. Mr. Goode was requested to lead in prayer.

The same system and order prevailed both at Park Hill and Dwight missions, which we subsequently visited.

The school at Fairfield was not a boarding seminary, but a "day school," and free to all. The population in the vicinity was dense, and the school was well attended, mostly by girls, yet boys of a small size were also admitted. Miss Smith's school-room was well supplied with maps, cards, and globes for purposes of illustration. We saw no others so well and so conveniently furnished.

There was a good farm in connection with the mission, the product of which nearly supplied the demands of the family. The needed supplies of horses, oxen, and milk cows were not wanting. We were gratified to learn that Dr. B.'s congregations were good, and his Church composed of substantial and pious men and women. A large and prosperous Sunday school was a most interesting appendage of the mission.

On Tuesday morning, at an early hour, we bade the kind family adieu, and went on to the seat of the conference. Oakchiah became sick on the way, and was compelled to stop and go to bed; Chukmabbee remained to take care of him.

On reaching Tablequah Mr. Goode and myself were taken to Park Hill, and introduced to the family of the Rev. Mr. Worcester, with whom we were kindly entertained during the session of the conference.

Park Hill was a missionary station of much note. Mr. Worcester was the superintendent of the establishment, and was eminently qualified for the important position. There was a good farm; a frame church of proper size; a good frame school-house; a two-story building used for a book establishment, having its printing-presses and book bindery. There were two frame buildings, each two stories high, for family residences, occupied by Mr. Worcester and by Rev. D. Foreman, who was a Cherokee, and connected with the mission. The Scriptures were translated and printed in the Cherokee and Choctaw languages at Park Hill. Hymn-books, tracts, spelling-books, and readers were also translated and published there. John Candy, a Cherokee, was foreman in setting type, and W. Worcester, a son of Rev. Mr. Worcester, was the head-workman in the bindery. The school was taught by a Miss Avery, who was an accomplished and interesting young lady.

There was also a Miss Thompson in the family, who taught a school a short distance from Park Hill, with whose character and history we were deeply interested. She was certainly a model missionary, having consecrated upon the Divine altar her "body and spirit, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable in God's sight." She had gone into the Cherokee country when a young lady; had emigrated with the Indians from the state of Georgia to their present home; had labored in the Park Hill School till she thought herself to have grown old; when, at the earnest solicitations of her relatives, she returned to her New England home, to spend the evening of her life with the surviving companions of her youth. She was extremely happy to meet with loved ones from whom she had been separated for a score of years. They gave her a most affectionate welcome to their hearts and homes, and did all within their power to contribute to her comfort and happiness. When a few weeks had elapsed, and her round of visiting was completed, she began to look around for work. She longed to be useful; but there were no open doors for such labor as her habits of life had qualified her for and given her tastes to enter upon and accomplish. Her soul longed for its appropriate work; she could not live in idleness, and must be wretched if she failed to be useful. The truth finally flashed upon her that she had committed a blunder; that it was an error to quit the Indians. She hastily made a second round of visits, bidding her New England friends a final farewell, and returned to her adopted people, with the language of Ruth to Naomi in her heart, if not upon her lips, "Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people; thy God, my God; where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried."

Miss Thompson was probably near fifty years of age, yet in the enjoyment of excellent health. She had returned to labor for destitute children—for scores of bright, active, and interesting little girls, who might be taught the fear of the Lord, won to Christ, and prepared for a life of usefulness on earth, and then to become jewels in the crown of the blessed Savior in heaven.

On returning to Park Hill she found her place in the mission filled by another; but she was rather pleased to find it so, for she went out a mile and a half distant, and opened a new school, which was soon filled with children that otherwise would not have been taught. She walked back and forth, making her home with her old friends of the mission; and she was cheerful and happy in her work, intending to live, die, and be buried with her Cherokee friends. Whether she still survives, or has fallen at her post, I know not; but generations yet unborn shall rise up to call her blessed. I can never think of the life of privation, toil, and sacrifice of that devoted female without feelings of earnest sympathy and sentiments of profound respect. She was a true missionary, giving her life to the work.

CHAPTER XXXV.

PERSECUTED MISSIONARIES.

REVS. MR. WORCESTER and Dr. Butler, it will be remembered, were Presbyterian ministers, sent out as missionaries to labor with the Cherokee Indians, while they were still upon their reserved lands east of the Mississippi river. They entered upon their work in the year 1825, while themselves and families were comparatively young. Having labored successfully a few years, the General Government determined to purchase the Indian reserved lands, and remove the Cherokees to new territory on the frontiers west of the Mississippi. The first overtures on the part of the United States authorities were treated with indifference, amounting almost to contempt. After a time the efforts were renewed, but without success. The people of Georgia became impatient of delay; they were eager to divide the fertile lands among themselves. It would open a rich field for speculation. It was finally determined that Georgia would extend her jurisdiction over the Cherokee nation, and control matters according to her sovereign pleasure. They affected to believe that the missionaries employed their influence adverse to the interests of those who were striving to obtain the possession of the reserved lands. Laws were accordingly enacted requiring all white men to quit the Indian territory, under penalty of heavy fines and confinement in the state prison. The local officers were not reluctant to execute the laws with the utmost promptness and rigor. All the missionaries obeyed the unrighteous mandate except Mr. Worcester and Dr. Butler. They believed the law to be not only iniquitous, but unconstitutional; claiming that, if the Indian title were even extinguished, the General Government alone could exercise jurisdiction over the country, and that the state of Georgia had no power in the premises. They were so advised by eminent legal counsel. And knowing themselves to be guilty of no crime, and believing that it was the will of God that they should remain with their people, to take care of their Churches, and not leave them to be scattered abroad as sheep without a shepherd, they determined to remain and abide the consequences.

They were immediately arrested, and, after a preliminary examination, they were required to appear and to answer in the state court, which would not convene for several months. They were not suffered to give bail, though no one entertained the slightest doubt as to their willingness to appear and answer at the proper tribunal. Dr. Butler and Mr. Worcester were carried out of the Cherokee country, and placed in custody of a police force known as the "Georgia Guards." Their prison limits were defined; and if they should presume to travel beyond them, the decree was that they should be immediately locked up in the county jail.

During the time they were in the custody of the "Georgia Guards" Mr. Worcester's family was seriously afflicted; and finally a messenger came to inform him that his daughter was dead, and that it would be a great comfort to the bereaved mother and wife to have him come at least to the funeral. He earnestly requested permission to go and comfort his wife and bury his child, but the prayer was not heard. They rejoiced to witness the agony of his soul, hoping that he might be tortured into a compliance with their wishes, and so take his family and abandon the country. But when night came, at a late hour he stole away, and traveled rapidly to the home of his afflicted family. He whispered words of consolation to his wife and little ones; prayed earnestly that Heaven's blessings might rest upon them in their season of darkness and trial. He then gazed for a few minutes most earnestly upon the lifeless remains of his beloved daughter. Then leaving his wife in sorrow and tears, and the child unburied, he hastened back to the place of his confinement, and saw his family not again till he had been clothed in the garb of the miserable convict, and locked up in the dark cell designed for robbers and cut-throats.

At the court both Worcester and Butler were found guilty of a violation of law, and sentenced to confinement, at hard labor, in the state prison for a period of four years. The decision of the court was carried into immediate effect; they were incarcerated, and no act of kindness or mercy was extended unto them. They immediately took an appeal to the Supreme Court of the United States; the appeal was prosecuted with promptness, and the decision of the Georgia court was reversed, and the marshal was ordered to set the prisoners at liberty; but the Georgia authorities claimed sovereignty, repudiated the authority of the General Government, defied the Supreme Court, and trampled its mandate under their feet. A period of fifteen months elapsed before those persecuted ministers were set at liberty; they were kept by arbitrary power, and in contempt of the decrees of the highest tribunals of the nation.

The facts here recorded we had from the lips of Mr. Worcester. He spoke of it modestly, not censoriously; and whenever it was possible to extenuate the course of conduct which men in high places had pursued, he seemed to take pleasure in doing it. No word of bitterness escaped his lips. Nor have I, at this date, the least inclination to record a word of censure against those who acted a prominent part in that scene of persecution, in the exercise of an unwarranted assumption of power. The most of the actors have doubtless gone to that tribunal where every act and motive will be read and known, and a righteous judgment shall be rendered.

The result of the unhappy struggle between the Government and the Cherokees is well known; the facts recorded present a dark page in our history.

The lands were obtained; the Indians were driven from their homes, their altars, and their council fires. The faithful missionaries, true to the cause of Christ and his followers, accompanied them to their distant home in the wilderness; and there we found them earnestly engaged in the prosecution of that glorious work to which their lives had been consecrated. They entertained no thought of ever leaving their mission-fields; they were even laying their *offspring* upon the same altar; training them to walk in their footsteps; devoting their lives to the cause of the Redeemer.

I had *read* of missionaries—of Brainerd, of Eliot, and others—but hitherto I had *seen* none whom I regarded as worthy of the appellation. These had passed through fiery ordeals, and had stood firm. They had suffered willingly for Christ's sake, only claiming rewards in heaven. They were not missionaries for a month or a year, but for *life;* and no man is really a missionary who does not cheerfully give *all* to the great work of evangelizing the world.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

CONFERENCE SESSION.

On Wednesday morning we met at Riley's Chapel, one mile from Tahlequah, standing out in the open prairie. We could not discover the wisdom of the location. Bishop Morris was present, and opened the conference with the reading of the Scriptures, singing and prayer. W. H. Goode and H. C. Benson were elected Secretaries. The Indian Mission conference had been created by the General conference which had closed its session in the month of June preceding. We were now met to organise and hold the first session; the preachers had formerly been members of the Missouri and the Arkansas conferences, and were now met in one body for the first time. There were five Indian preachers who were members of the conference; three of them were Cherokees and two were Choctaws. There were a number of native local preachers, one of whom was a Muscogee, or Creek. The closing prayer of each day's session was made by an Indian in his native language.

On the second day of the session the Rev. Mr. Hurlburt, a Wesleyan minister of the Canada conference, presented his parchments and a certificate of good moral character, and asked to be received into the conference. In answer to the questions asked by Bishop Morris, he satisfied the conference that he was willing to conform to our usages and be governed by our Discipline, and was accordingly received.

Mr. H. had labored many years with a band of the Chippewa Indians in Canada, and had thoroughly mastered their language; and as the Pottawattomies speak the same dialect, with slight differences of accent, he was appointed to labor with that people.

It will be borne in mind that a plan of separation had originated in the recent General conference, which contemplated the division of the Methodist Episcopal Church into two distinct ecclesiastical organizations. The plan was to be submitted to all the annual conferences, inasmuch as it required a majority of three-fourths of the members of all the annual conferences present and voting to make a division of the Charter Fund and Book Concerns. One of the provisions of the plan was to give to each border conference the privilege of adhering to either section of the Church. After the conditional plan of separation had been adopted by the General conference, a caucus was held by some sixty or more delegates, representing the conferences in the slaveholding states, in which the initiatory steps were taken for the organization of a Methodist Episcopal Church South. It was agreed that a convention should be held in the month of May, 1845, in the city of Louisville, Kentucky. A circular was issued and sent to all the southern conferences, recommending each to elect delegates to take their seats in the proposed convention, to effect the new Church organization. On Saturday, the fourth day of our session, two resolutions were introduced; by the adoption of the first, the conference gave its sanction to the division of the Church; and by the adoption of the second resolution, the conference determined to proceed at once to the election of delegates to the Louisville convention.

When the resolutions were introduced Rev. W. H. Goode vacated the Secretary's desk, and declined voting on either resolution, nor would he cast a ballot in the election. The Assistant Secretary wrote up the minutes till after the delegates were chosen. On counting the votes, J. C. Berryman and W. H. Goode were found to have a majority of all the votes cast, and were declared duly elected: D. B. Cumming was appointed a reserve delegate.

On Saturday afternoon we organized a Conference Missionary Society. The minutes were read and adopted, and the conference adjourned under pledge not to leave till Monday.

On Sunday morning there were sermons by W. H. Goode and Bishop Morris, at the close of which the Bishop ordained Walter H. Collins, H. C. Benson, John Page, and Isaac Chukmabbee deacons.

J. C. Berryman was appointed superintendent of the conference; L. B. Stateler, presiding elder of the Choctaw district, and W. H. Goode and H. C. Benson to Fort Coffee Academy and mission. The session was harmonious and pleasant, and very brief, completing the business and adjourning on the fourth day.

Bishop Morris had performed a journey of two hundred and fifty miles to reach the seat of the conference, through a wilderness country, inhabited only by the Indian tribes of the border. Leaving the Missouri river at Fort Leavenworth, he had traveled, in company with a few ministers, through the Delaware, Shawnee, Pottawattomie, and Osage tribes, to the capital of the Cherokee nation. They had been forced to camp out, and prepare their food by log fires. The trip was greatly enjoyed by the Bishop, who did not fail to study character as he passed through the different races of the red men of the forest. We heard him remark that he had *negotiated an important treaty* with a Pottawattomie, while camped upon the bank of the Osage river. "We had built a fire," said the Bishop, "not far from his cabin; but wood was rather scarce, and the Pottawattomie was not willing that we should burn any. He came to our camp with a cloud upon his brow, and by his vehement gesticulation, ordered us not to burn his wood. But that would not answer our purpose, for the night was chilly and our food must be prepared, and so I went to our stores and took out two crackers, and then taking a bright dime from my pocket and holding it so the camp-fire should shine upon it, I indicated by signs that he should take the bread and the dime, and that we should take wood for our fire—the terms were accepted and the treaty confirmed. I had *bought* him for two biscuits and a dime." The Bishop's health was perfect; he was buoyant and almost youthful in spirit.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

CHEROKEE CAPITAL—LANGUAGE—LITERATURE.

Tahlequah is situated a few miles from the Neosho river, and fifteen miles from Fort Gibson, in the center of a rich and densely-populated portion of the nation. It was first chosen as council-ground, and subsequently made the permanent seat of Government of the tribe. Its location and surroundings rendered it by far the most important place in the nation.

Park Hill was in the vicinity, Fairfield and Dwight missions were near. There was a Methodist church in sight of the village; a school-house also. There was an excellent brick court-house, well and conveniently arranged. At the time of our visit the Supreme Court was in session; the Rev. David Foreman, of Park Hill, was one of the judges. Mr. F. was a well-educated, talented, and worthy man, having no great amount of Indian blood in his veins. He was a large, well-formed, intellectual, and dignified-looking gentleman.

The Hon. John Ross, the chief, resided upon a farm near the capital, but being absent on a visit to Washington City, we did not have an opportunity of seeing him.

Lewis Ross, his brother, also resided upon a farm.

His family were well educated and genteel, some of whom were Church members.

William P. Ross, a son of Lewis, was the editor of the Cherokee Advocate, a weekly newspaper, which was edited with tact and marked ability. Three pages of the paper were printed in English, and the fourth page in the native language. Mr. R., the editor, had been thoroughly educated in an eastern college. The state-house at that time had not been erected, but its foundations were laid and material was on the ground for an elegant and substantial *capitol.*

In the village there were dry-goods stores, groceries, and a number of mechanic shops—also a tavern and a boarding-house. We were entertained at the house of a Mrs. Wolf; she was the widow of *Young Wolf*, who had died a few months previous to that period. Mr. W. had been a man of sterling integrity and of excellent Christian character. And though uneducated, he had taken a deep interest in the subject of education; he had raised a family of sons and daughters who were well instructed and reputable. The daughters were especially amiable and intelligent, one of whom became the wife of a traveling preacher, and has since died in hope of a better life. Mrs. W. was not an Indian, but the daughter of German parents, and when a child had fallen into the hands of the Indians, had been reared by them, and finally became the wife of Young Wolf. She was an intelligent and sensible woman, but did not speak the English language.

CHEROKEE TYPE.

It may not be generally known that the Roman alphabet can not be employed in writing the Cherokee language; it utterly fails to convey the sounds. We heard a Cherokee minister remark, in conference, that he could speak, in his own tongue, six weeks without ever being under the necessity of shutting his mouth; he only knew of two words containing *labial* sounds, and they were innovations.

The sounds were all guttural, and the language astonishingly copious, rendering it exceedingly difficult to write or to represent its sounds by the use of an alphabet of arbitrary characters.

No adult white man was ever known to master the tongue so as to be able to speak it—it must be learned in infancy before any other or it is never acquired. Men may learn to read and write, however, without much difficulty. The old missionaries can read, write, and translate it as well as the native Cherokee, but can not give its peculiar accent, emphasis, and intonation. They never attempt to converse or preach in Cherokee. In one respect it differs from other Indian dialects; while they are barren of words and greatly dependent on gesticulation to convey their ideas, it is so copious, that the speaker expresses himself so clearly that action or gesticulation is not required. The Cherokee orator utters his thoughts in language unsurpassed in terseness and variety, yet is a less graceful speaker than the Choctaw.

The Cherokee language, from necessity stern and absolute, has a type of its own. Its eighty-six guttural sounds are represented by as many letters or characters; those sounds are distinct when falling upon the ear of the native; but to us they appear to be one inharmonious grunt or aspirated breathing, and not created by organs of speech. Their alphabet was invented by an uneducated native, who was so afflicted with rheumatism that he was confined within his lodge during an entire winter season. He commenced to cut various forms in bark, his only design being amusement. He finally gave names to his *chips*, and caused them to represent certain sounds employed in conversation; he progressed by degrees till he had formed one hundred and twenty characters or distinct types. He next learned to arrange his letters so as to form sentences; and finding that he could make his "*chips talk*," he instructed his daughter in the newly-discovered science. As soon as her knowledge of the alphabet would warrant an experiment, he announced to his neighbors that he could make *chips talk*. He and his daughter would take positions remote from each other, and he would arrange his blocks to represent any proposed question, and sending them to his daughter, she would send the appropriate answer.

His neighbors could not question his skill and power to do what he claimed ability to accomplish; but they questioned the morality of his conduct. In short, they charged him with witchcraft, and threatened to inflict summary punishment upon him. To save his life, George Guess at once made known the true nature of his discovery, and imparted all that he knew to his friends and neighbors. The missionaries examined the invention and saw at a glance its utility and its simplicity, and immediately pressed the discovery into their service. They improved the type, reducing the number of letters from one hundred and twenty to eighty-six, sent models to a foundery and procured types of a permanent character, and immediately proceeded to translate and print the New Testament Scriptures. Guess was a heathen in feeling and in practice; he had always been bitterly hostile to education and Christian civilization, and was greatly chagrined to find that his *talking chips* were employed in breaking up and abolishing the customs and traditions of his sires. He regretted his discovery, especially as his types were employed in printing the Bible, to be circulated among the people in their vernacular tongue. As long as he lived Guess retained his opposition to education and religion—"he would never consent to be a *white man*, a *woman*, a *slave!* he would be a *brave!* a *man!* a *lord* of the forest! strong in *war* and in the *chase!*"

He finally became so disgusted with the changes and innovations which found favor with his tribe, that he determined to abandon his people. He accordingly joined an expedition and went out upon the plains, near the sources of the Arkansas and Platte rivers, and engaged in hunting the buffalo and dealing in peltries. He ultimately fell into the hands of Prairie

Indians and perished. Poor Guess! the child of genius and blest with talent, he might have shined as a star of the first magnitude, occupying the most prominent positions in the nation. We deeply regret that he did not embrace the truth, so that he might have blessed his race, obtained peace and favor with God, and died an heir of a blessed immortality.

The invention of the new type was a boon of unspeakable value to the Cherokee people. It is an epoch in their history from which Christian civilization dates. Hitherto its progress was slow indeed, and the discouragements numerous. There could be but little communication between ministers and the adult population. They could not hope to be ever able to converse or preach in Cherokee, and the grown-up native would not study and acquire the English language.

After elementary books had been prepared a large proportion of the adult population learned the alphabet, and soon were able to read in their own tongue. I saw it stated in their weekly newspaper that the *per centum* of the population who could not read was less than any state in the Union could boast.

In approaching Tahlequah we saw a post planted by the roadside, with a transverse beam, which had evidently been used as a gallows. There some poor felon had yielded up his life, to atone to society, in part, for his crimes. "Here," said one of our company, "is an evidence of civilization." With all other tribes on the border, so far as we could learn, capital punishment was inflicted by shooting the criminal. We had gone but a short distance further when a printed card upon a post attracted our attention. It was a notice that the CHEROKEE BIBLE SOCIETY would hold its annual meeting on a set day. One of the company remarked, "*Here* is a stronger evidence of civilization." And just before we entered the village we saw a crowd standing around an open grave, while a native preacher was earnestly engaged in a funeral service. "And *here*," said a third, "is *proof* of *Christian* civilization."

INCIDENT.

During the conference session a minister, in a sermon, related the following incident: "We were holding a meeting in the grove, and on Sunday morning brother B. was preaching on the sufferings of Christ and the merit of his death. He was clear, earnest, and impressive, and there was a deep feeling of solemnity and conviction in the congregation. When the preacher closed his sermon and sat down, an Indian woman—a Quapaw, if I remember correctly—walked forward deliberately, and threw herself prostrate upon the ground in front of the pulpit. She wept aloud, confessed her sins, in her native dialect, cried for mercy, and prayed for pardon through the merit of 'the suffering Son of God.' The Christian friends engaged in singing and prayer, while the sorrow of the poor, penitent woman became more and more intense and agonizing. At length she sprang to her feet. With tears streaming from her eyes, and joy beaming in her countenance, she exclaimed, 'Jesus good—very good—big as the world!'"

That was an Indian conversion, and who will dare to question its genuineness or Scriptural character?

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

POLITICAL STRIFE AND DISCORD.

THERE were warring elements and fierce conflicts of long standing and of the most virulent and uncompromising character in the Cherokee nation. Their troubles originated in the change of their system of government from a heathen and hereditary oligarchy to a democratic republic. Before they emigrated to the west they had thrown off pagan and traditional rites, ceremonies, and prerogatives. They had chosen John Ross to be their chief. About two-thirds of the tribe favored the new system of government, which went into immediate operation. The opposition was headed by Captain Ridge, who had a birthright to power under the hereditary *regime*. He was born a sachem, and could not consent to be shorn of his honors and prerogatives. The popular party, having elected their officers, and assumed the responsibilities of the government in its several departments, branded the Ridge party with rebellion and treason, and treated them accordingly; hence the many assassinations and violent and bloody conflicts which have marked the history of that people. The fraudulent circumstances attending the sale of their lands in Georgia greatly increased the bitterness of the hostility of the opposing factions. After their settlement in their present territory it was ardently desired that the antagonizing elements might be harmonized. But no concessions were made by either party, and there was not the slightest prospect of reconciliation. Ridge and the most of his active and influential supporters had fallen, but others had stepped forward, bold and resolute in their purpose to occupy their position.

At the time of which I am now writing Captain Rogers claimed to be the hereditary chief of the tribe. He was heir to the throne in the regular line of royal descent. But just as soon as he avowed his claim he was charged with treason, and forced to flee from his country to save his life. But fortunately his place of exile was not very remote from his family. He resided on a farm not more than thirty miles from the state line; and when he found it impossible to remain at home in security, he went over the line, and secured quarters at an aristocratic hotel kept at Fort Smith. His family were permitted to remain on the farm in peace; and although a visit from him would imperil his life, yet they could visit him at pleasure in his exile. I saw the old sachem frequently at the Fort Smith hotel, mingling with the *majors* and *captains* of the United States army. He was about fifty years of age, hale and well developed. He was dignified and lordly in his bearing, enduring his exile with a courage and philosophy becoming the chief of a great nation. As there was not the slightest prospect of a reconciliation between the belligerent factions, and as the pagan party could never, by any possibility, come into power, I presume the old Captain, if living, is still in banishment.

But John Ross, the ruling chief, was not, by any means, free from embarrassment. He knew his position to be one of imminent peril, and felt his life to be in jeopardy every hour. He spent a considerable portion of his time in the east every year, visiting Philadelphia, New York, and Washington cities. It was necessary for him annually to visit the war department and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, to look after the interests of his nation. But the duties of his office as chief required him to spend a portion of each year at Tahlequah, to attend to the executive business. During the period thus spent at home it became necessary to keep an armed guard about his person all the day long, and around his dwelling at night. When he traveled through the tribe he was attended by a military escort, for personal protection; and when he started east his guard escorted him over the state line; and at the time of his returning they would meet him on the line to bring him home in safety. All things considered, it was only in name and honor that the position of Ross was more desirable than that of Rogers, his rival.

When the day came for our return we took leave of our kind friends at Park Hill, thankful not merely for the hospitalities of the mission, but especially for the intelligent, frank, and fraternal social intercourse with which we had been favored, rendering our sojourn with them exceedingly pleasant. We were thankful for the lessons we had learned from their example of patient toil and uncomplaining endurance in the work of their divine Master.

Having chosen to return home by a new route, we reached the DWIGHT mission at sunset, traveling about thirty miles. It was a Presbyterian mission and the oldest one in the tribe, having been founded in the old nation, and re-established immediately after their arrival in the new territory. Mr. Hitchcock was the superintendent; he was a layman, and managed the farm and temporal interests of the station. There was a female seminary in which pupils were taught and boarded, but not clothed. Mr. Day and his wife were teachers of the school, and Mrs. Hitchcock was matron. There were over forty fine buxom lasses in attendance, from ten to sixteen years of age—many of them were very interesting, sprightly, and promising girls. Mr. Hitchcock and family had been with the tribe twenty-four years, engaged in the missionary work. They received no salaries from the Missionary Board; and the entire annual appropriations to the Dwight mission amounted to only fourteen hundred dollars. There was an excellent farm, well cultivated and well stocked, the produce of which nearly sustained the mission. All were taught to labor, and economy and frugality were thoroughly studied and practiced in every department. There was a plain, comfortable church, but no efficient pastor in connection with it at that time.

Rev. Mr. Buttrick and his aged companion were there, but not as active laborers in the mission. He was then superannuated, having retired from the active duties of the ministry. He could preach occasionally, but not with regularity, nor had he strength to perform pastoral labor. Father Buttrick had been twenty-seven years in the Cherokee tribe, laboring to establish and build up the cause of the Redeemer. His children were grown up and all settled in the east. They had earnestly urged their parents to return home and spend the evening of their days with them. But after mature deliberation himself and wife had resolved to end their pilgrimage with their Indian people. They had come to Dwight for the sake of the society; and having fitted up a comfortable log-cabin, they enjoyed a quiet retreat from the busy and exciting scenes of the world. With a good library and the desired papers and magazines, and with the privileges of the Church and the society, of kind and sympathising Christian friends, they were cheerful and happy, and patiently waiting the Master's summons to take them home to heaven. Our interview was from necessity brief, but full of interest, to us at least; as we rose to take our leave, father Buttrick interposed his paternal authority: "Come," said he, "this will not do, remain a few minutes longer, for we *must not* separate without prayer!" The little company joined in singing one of the songs of Zion, after which we all kneeled and Mr. Goode led the devotions. We can n ver forget that devout and holy man of God, who, with patriarchal simplicity and fervor, stood up and invoked Heaven's benediction upon us, as we bid him a final adieu. Since that period the papers have announced the departure of that aged disciple of the Lord. He has slept the long and dreamless sleep of death. His cold remains repose in the little churchyard, at the Dwight mission, with Indian graves all around. "I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."

On Tuesday morning we left DWIGHT MISSION for home; having become separated from Mr. Steele and our Indian preachers, Mr. Goode and myself were left to journey alone. Reaching Fort Smith at sunset, we procured refreshment for ourselves and horses, and crossing the Poteau river at twilight, we continued our journey and arrived at Fort Coffee before midnight.

In a few days after our return from conference the Rev. J. C. Berryman, the Rev. L. B. Stateler, the Rev. I. F. Collins, and Rev. John Page came to Fort Coffee. Stateler was presiding elder; Collins and Page had been appointed to the circuit, from which Fort Coffee and New Hope had been separated; and Berryman having been appointed superintendent of the conference, wished to make a tour through the nation, visiting the Red River settlements and the Chickasaw tribe.

Mr. Berryman had formerly been superintendent of the Indian Manual-Labor School in the Shawnee tribe, and had consequently considerable experience as an Indian missionary. He was an excellent preacher, a man of good address, and endowed with an unusual amount of energy, ambition, and perseverance. He remained in the Indian Mission conference some years, after which he retired from the itinerant work; and, aided by Professor Farnham, he succeeded in establishing a Female Collegiate Institute at Arcadia, Missouri, of which he was appointed President.

In the year 1851 the Indiana Asbury University honored Mr. Berryman with the "*gradum Artium Magistri;*" since that period I have known nothing of his movements and successes.

Learner B. Stateler was a plain, earnest, evangelical minister of Christ, and devoted to the one work of preaching the Gospel. He was a Kentuckian by birth, antislavery, conservative, but continued in the South after the division of the Church. Of his labors for the past few years I am not informed; he may have finished his course with joy and gone to his blessed reward.

Isaac F. Collins was a brother of Judson P. Collins, who was sent as a missionary to China. He was a good preacher, decidedly antislavery in his sentiments, and after the division of the Church went to Michigan, where he labored for a time in the itinerant work, after which he was transferred to the Kansas and Nebraska conference, where he is still employed.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

DEATH OF OAK-CHI-AH.

On the second day of November a lad came from Fort Smith with a note from a Mr. Moore, informing us that Oakchiah, the Indian preacher, had just died at his house, and he wished instructions with regard to his interment. Mr. Goode wrote to Mr. Moore to have the corpse decently buried, and to forward the bill of expenses to our mission, and it should be paid. It was accordingly done. A brief sketch of this native minister of Christ may not be wholly devoid of interest to the reader.

He was a full-blooded Choctaw, born in the old nation, about the year 1810, as we learned in conversation with him at Fort Coffee, where he spent a few days, on his way to conference. Previous to their emigration from Mississippi there was a revival of religion in the tribe, during which many precious souls were converted to God. Oakchiah was one of the trophies of the cross, won to the fold of the blessed Savior and numbered with the heirs of salvation. He was young, sprightly, and active, and full of energy and zeal in the cause which he had so heartily espoused. When he was admitted into the Church and baptized, he was called William Winans; he still retained his Indian name, however, and was called *Oakchiah* as long as he lived. Soon after his conversion he became deeply solicitous for the salvation of his friends and neighbors—his kindred according to the flesh. Whenever an opportunity was given he would rise up in the congregation, and with native, pure, and burning eloquence would warn the people to repent of their sins and come to the Lord Jesus Christ, that they might not perish, but have everlasting life. His word was attended with such unction and power that his ardent appeals were well-nigh irresistible. Persecutions, heartless and bitter, followed; Satan and his emissaries were aroused, and became furious in their fruitless efforts to stay the tide of religious influence that was sweeping over the land.

The Indian converts were all persecuted, but those who were actively engaged in propagating the revival influence were pursued with bitter scorn and opprobrious epithets. When jeers, taunts, and ridicule failed to direct attention from the service of God, threats of violence and death were employed.

Oakchiah's gifts were such that the Church had soon given him authority to speak and to conduct religious worship, and he was regarded generally as a preacher. But he stood alone in his father's family, all of whom, except himself, were bitter persecutors of the cause of Christ. He was commanded by his father to desist from preaching, and warned that if he persisted his life should certainly pay the forfeit. The old man thought it surely trial enough to have a son to become a Christian, but to have him *preach* was a degradation to which the father could not tamely submit. But Oakchiah, having attained unto maturity of years, felt himself responsible to God for his conduct; and although he was a dutiful, respectful, and affectionate son, yet he felt that he must obey God rather than man. He had an appointment to *talk* to the people on a certain day, and his father knew it, and determined that the matter of controversy should at once be brought to an issue. He accordingly notified his son that if he should attempt to preach on that occasion he would do so at his peril; but Oakchiah, prompted by convictions of duty and guided, as he believed, by the divine Spirit, went to the church and published the glad message of mercy and life to his fellow-men. Having faithfully preached Christ to his people for the last time, as he supposed, he returned to meet his infuriated parent, at the threshold of the cabin. There the father stood with form erect, broad and athletic, in the vigor of manhood; his tawny visage was rendered almost black by the malice which rankled in his breast; the deadly rifle was in his hand, and he was fully prepared to consummate his fiend-like purpose. Oakchiah approached, expecting to fall, but was calm and fearless; for he was in the discharge of duty, and God's grace wonderfully strengthened and sustained him in the dark hour of trial. With deep peace in his soul and with love beaming in his countenance, and with unusual tenderness in the intonations of his voice, he addressed his parent:

"Father, will you shoot me? What have I done that I must die so soon? Father, I die a *Christian*, and shall go to the land of the pure and good to live with the blessed Savior!"

Although the rifle had been leveled to take deadly aim, the old man paused, his muscles relaxed, the weapon fell to the ground, and a torrent of tears gushed from his eyes, and flowed down his cheeks.* He was a warrior who could boldly meet the deadly foe on the battle-field; his spirit never cowered in presence of danger or of death; he scorned the rage and power of man; but the meek spirit of a follower of Christ completely unmanned him. In such forbearance and love he saw arguments irresistible in favor of the Christian religion. Thus the father was conquered; his haughty spirit was subdued; he became deeply penitent, and was soon numbered with the believers in Jesus. The lion was transformed into a lamb; the old soldier became a disciple, having received the kingdom as a little child. He was still living in 1844, a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and a devoted Christian. He visited our mission, talked and prayed with the pupils in the school, and seemed to be a sensible, cheerful, and happy old man.

Oakchiah was licensed to preach, and admitted into the Mississippi conference; he traveled two or three years, was ordained a deacon, and then asked the conference to grant him a location, that he might go with his tribe to their new homes in the west. By that removal the Church members sustained irreparable loss;

their ministers, houses of worship, religious ordinances, and Church privileges were left behind. They were deprived of pastoral influences, and doomed to be scattered abroad as sheep without a shepherd; their temptations, trials, and persecutions were of no ordinary character. But the Choctaws did not long continue destitute of the ministry of the word and the ordinances of the Lord's house. Their old pastors had not forgotten them; soon a small band of Gospel pioneers were seen to take up their line of march to the western border. Threading their way on horseback, through the swamps, across the rivers, and over the mountains, pursuing the trails, they finally penetrated the unbroken forests where the Indians had been located. The scattered flocks were again collected to the fold, the Church reorganized, and once more the rude dwelling of the Indian became a bethel, from which prayer and praise went up to God, who is the "shepherd and bishop of souls." But, alas! many were missing, having strayed away from the fold, and yielded to the power of the tempter. Oakchiah retained his integrity, in a good degree, remaining firm in the faith, yet for a season he had lost much of the zeal and fervor which had characterized his religious life in the old nation. In the year 1843 he was readmitted into the itinerancy, within the bounds of the Arkansas conference, and appointed by Bishop Andrew to the Puckchenubbee circuit, in the southern portion of the nation. Rev. J. M. Steele was placed in charge of the circuit. At the session of the Indian Mission conference Oakchiah was returned to Puckchenubbee circuit by Bishop Morris; but his work was already done; he had preached his last sermon.

In returning from conference he became sick, and was left on the roadside in the care of Chukmabbee, but we did not regard the symptoms as alarming, and supposed that rest and refreshment would restore him, so that within a day or two he would again be able to resume his journey. On the thirty-first day of October he reached Fort Smith, exhausted and suffering severely with fever and pain in the breast. He was destitute of money, and knew not what to do, and so lay down by the side of the street in the shade of a building, to spend the night. But a friend, in passing, saw his condition, and took him to the house of a kind Christian family, who did all in their power for his comfort. A physician was called, restoratives were given, and he retired without any apprehensions of immediate danger. Early in the morning he was heard to walk from his room out upon the porch, where he fell upon the ground. A friend ran to him to give him aid, and to inquire after his welfare. Oakchiah replied in Choctaw; raising his hand and pointing upward, in a few moments he expired. He was fully apprised of his condition, knew that the time of his departure was at hand, and so gave the signal of victory, and went to claim his mansion in the skies. There was no kind friend at hand to converse with him in his own language; none to receive his dying message, and bear words of love and tenderness to his distant wife and little sons. Yet it was evident that he died in the faith; God was with him; he was triumphant in the last conflict. His body now sleeps on the southern bank of the Arkansas, a little above the Fort—there to await the "voice of the archangel and the trump of God," when all who are in their graves shall come forth.

Oakchiah was about five feet and six inches in hight, with a frail and delicate constitution. His features were regular, and his countenance pleasant and very expressive. He was dignified, graceful, and easy in his manners, and more than ordinarily communicative for an Indian. He was a popular, earnest, and very successful preacher. His style was not bold and majestic, but gentle, soothing, and pathetic—that which melts and subdues the heart. "In almost every instance when I have heard him preach," said his colleague, "the congregations have been bathed in tears before the sermon closed."

O, what a thrilling scene shall be witnessed in the great day, when Oakchiah, and the minister under whose labors he was brought to Christ, and the scores converted through his instrumentality, shall hear the voice that shall wake the dead, and shall arise and come forth clothed in the habiliments of immortality! Then shall they hail each other in the home of the saved above, to join in redemption's song: "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us to be kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever."

CHAPTER XL.

PROGRESS IN STUDY—DEATH OF A LAD.

VARIOUS and conflicting have been the opinions entertained with regard to the intellect of the North American Indians. They are generally reputed to be shrewd, cunning, sprightly, and fluent in speech.

It must occur to every reflecting mind, however, that there must be great diversity as to intellect among the different classes, and that habits and pursuits of life have an important bearing upon the question. Much depends upon physical organization, and modes of living naturally affect the conformation and development of the several organs of the body.

The Choctaws were fairly developed and well proportioned in body, but not superior nor quite equal to the average of white people, while the entire want of mental and moral training could not fail to superinduce less vigorous intellectual manifestations. Indian lads are infants in thought, in feeling, and in mental strength when well-grown boys. But they were not seriously wanting in intellectual ability; they made fair progress in study, being able, in most cases, to read easy lessons within a few weeks after entering school; they almost all would learn to write with remarkable facility, and many of them would excel in penmanship without much effort. In a number of instances lads commenced the year in the alphabet, and before the session closed were able to write letters home to their friends; their passion for letter-writing was almost equal to that for shaking hands.

There were two lads, whose progress in study I never saw excelled; they commenced in the alphabet, and within three weeks' time were able to read in the New Testament; and, at their earnest solicitations, were permitted to take their places in the Testament class in the Sunday school, and each was able to read his verse in turn with the balance of the class. But during the week they were kept in the spelling book and first readers for several weeks longer before they were advanced to more difficult studies. They were about fifteen and sixteen years of age. The names we gave them were Moses Porter and Coleman Daniel. The former was a remarkably-interesting and well-disposed youth; and though it will be a little out of chronological order, I will here give a brief sketch of him.

He was one of the first six from the Pushmataha district, who were present on the day the Academy opened its first session; Moses was an orphan, having neither father nor mother. From the first day he was noted for his faithfulness and prompiness to every duty assigned him; he manifested an excellent disposition, and was patient, kind, and obliging in his intercourse with his associates. It was never necessary to give him a single word of reproof; or to remind him of any labor or duty which appropriately devolved upon him. Moses professed conversion and united with the Church before the close of the first session, and was baptized by W. H. Goode and admitted to the sacrament of the Lord's supper; and I do not recollect that he ever turned aside or performed a single act which could suggest a doubt as to the genuineness of his piety and Christian character. He was feeble in health, being scrofulous and predisposed to pulmonary consumption. In the spring of 1845 he had a severe attack of pneumonia, but was restored again to usual health; but in the spring of 1846 he had a second attack of pneumonia, which was violent and threatened to terminate fatally. Dr. R. G. Meek did all within his power to arrest the course of the disease and to restore the patient to health, but without success. The disease settled upon the lungs, and it soon became evident that he must die within a very few days. When the information was communicated to him, it gave him no alarm; he remained calm, and continued to suffer patiently; no word of complaint or murmuring escaped his lips. He was willing and prompt in taking the medicines prescribed, and in observing all the directions that were given by the nurse and the physician.

The time had come when Moses must die; gladly would he have lived to labor in the cause of his blessed Master, and to be useful to his fellow-men; but God had otherwise determined—the ardent hopes and plans of usefulness were never to be realized in this life.

He understood his condition, reflected seriously and prayerfully upon the solemnities of death; he spoke with calmness, expressing unshaken confidence in the merit of the Savior, believing that through grace he should be accepted, and permitted to live with angels in the land of the redeemed at God's right hand.

A few minutes before he ceased to breathe he sent for one of the teachers to come to his room; looking into the face of his instructor, he said, "I am now dying, soon I will be gone! send my trunk and clothes to my brother at home. I have three dollars and a half of money, which you will give to my sister. Now I am ready—*all is right, all is right!*" He said no more, but closed his eyes in death, and went to live with the redeemed and saved. He was truly a trophy of grace, and is doubtless now numbered with the countless multitudes before the throne, "who have gone up through great tribulation, having washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

There was the philosophy of a living faith in the last conflict; there was a sublimity in the words which fell from the lips of the dying youth, who was just rescued from pagan darkness, in time to die in the faith of the everlasting Gospel.

Artless and true to the thoughts and convictions of that solemn hour, his last words were essentially the same that were spoken by the dying Bishop M'Kendree. The Bishop was thoroughly taught; had read and comprehended the various systems of philosophy. He was a theologian; could reason profoundly on the immortality of the future state, and could hold forth the promises of the Gospel, which contemplate the life to come; and yet his dying words were simple and only expressive of trust in Christ—"All is well, all is well!" It was the last note of victory. It was *light* while "passing through the valley of the shadow of death."

The dying Indian youth was but a babe in Christ; had just learned to read and love the precious truths of the Gospel. He knew nothing but Christ and his power to comfort and cheer the soul. His experience of a change of heart and life dated back only about two years. His race was swift and the goal was almost gained. And now upon his straw mattress, in the log-cabin he had obtained the same grace, exercised the same all-conquering faith, and realised the same unspeakable peace which characterized the death scene of the sainted M'Kendree. The Bishop's dying words were, "All is well, all is well!" The last words of the Indian boy, Moses, were, "All is right, all is right!"

The essential divinity of our holy religion is seen in its effects upon life, character, and experience in all lands and among all the races of men. It is wisely adapted to all grades of intellect and cultivation; who can reflect upon its power to comfort and to cheer the dying, whether aged or young, and for one moment candidly doubt its vital essence, its power to draw the sting of death, and reflect bright and glorious light down into the vaults of the grave?

CHAPTER XLI.

REV. MR. FISK, INDIAN—PNEUMONIA—GRAHAM.

On the seventh day of November two Indians came to Fort Coffee to visit the Academy and to make the acquaintance of those who were laboring in connection with it. Rev. Mr. Fisk was a full-blood Choctaw, a member of the Presbyterian Church, and an assistant at one of the missions on Red river. He had been on a visit to Park Hill, and had returned by the way of our mission. In the evening we assembled the family in the chapel for religious worship, as Mr. Fisk had consented to preach to the students. His text was the sixteenth verse of the third chapter of the Gospel by St. John: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." His manner was pleasant, and his emphasis and fervor were peculiarly impressive and appropriate. The theme was the *love* of God in giving his Son to die for sinners. He spoke of Gethsemane and of the cross with solemnity and appropriateness. He crossed his arms to describe the instrument of torture upon which the Savior was crucified. He struck in the palms of his hands to indicate the manner in which Christ was nailed to the wood, and then a significant movement of the hand reminded us of the stroke of the soldier's spear which pierced the Savior's side. The sermon was delivered in the native language; it was earnest, impressive, and deeply interesting to the students, as was evident from their undivided attention from the commencement to the close of the discourse.

Mr. Fisk was not educated in English, and hence used the Choctaw Testament and hymn-book; he was able to converse in our language to a limited extent.

The other visitor was the father of Oakchiah, of whom an account has been given in a preceding chapter. He had received intelligence of his son's death, and had come to learn the particulars, and to take the pony, saddle, blankets, and clothing home to the bereaved wife and children. The old gentleman was near sixty years of age, yet in the enjoyment of vigorous health. He felt deeply the death of his son, spoke of him with tenderness and affection, and even made a visit to Fort Smith, that he might see the grave where his remains were deposited.

The horse and outfit of Oakchiah had been sent to Fort Coffee immediately after the funeral had taken place. When the father returned from his visit to the grave he emptied the saddle-bags of his son, to ascertain their contents; and as they had contained the outfit of an itinerant minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church, I will name the articles. There was a shirt, a pair of stockings, a box of matches, a leather cup, an English grammar, a Choctaw Testament and hymn-book, a small package of brown sugar, and about a quart of the kernels of dried hickory-nuts. Such was the outfit of an embassador of the Lord Jesus, and such his preparation for a journey of over two hundred miles to attend the session of his conference.

The outfit of the white minister in that country did not materially differ from that just described. Every traveling preacher would carry his blankets, his provisions, a cup, matches, and a rope with which to "stake out" his pony. He might be so fortunate as to find a comfortable bed beneath some friendly roof, but he would more probably be compelled to wrap his blanket about him, and then lie down beneath the shelter of a forest oak to enjoy the luxury of sleeping in the open air. We knew a minister who was uniformly permitted, in a certain neighborhood, to sleep in a vacated corn-crib; and he was thankful for the privilege, especially in rainy weather.

During the latter part of the winter and the spring of 1845 our community was seriously afflicted with *pneumonia*, which fell upon us like an epidemic. Within a short time after the disease made its first appearance, there were more than twenty cases of it in the mission family. As there was no physician at Fort Coffee at that time, we were compelled to send to Fort Smith, which was not only inconvenient, but very expensive. Dr. M. came promptly, was skillful in his treatment, and soon the patients were relieved. We found it necessary, in many instances, to assume the responsibility of prescribing in the absence of the physician. It required no great skill to use the lancet, apply the blistering plaster, and administer proper doses of tartarized antimony and other expectorants. We kept a small stock of medicines; and as Mr. Brigham was a professional druggist, and was quite familiar with the medicines, we were able to pass through the season of sickness with only an occasional visit from the Doctor.

In January I visited Massard, and formed an acquaintance with Rev. William Graham, of the Fort Smith circuit. It was his first year in the west, and the first also in the itinerant ministry. He had been licensed to preach in the state of Pennsylvania; and having been recommended to the conference, he had taken his recommendation and had presented it to the Arkansas conference, had been admitted, and sent to its extreme western limits. I was not surprised to find Mr. Graham very much discouraged, and entertaining serious thoughts of quitting his circuit and returning to his friends in the east. His field of labor was hard and very extensive, spreading over an immense territory of a wild, poor, wilderness region of country, which was very sparsely populated. The society was *sui generis*, and such as can only be found upon the extreme frontier of a very poor country. They had never known any thing of life in the "old settlements;" but having always rode upon the crest of the advancing tide of emigration, they had remained gloriously free from the trammels and conventionalities of refined and fashionable society. "The schoolmaster was" literally "abroad," but in his travels had never passed that way.

But I must not be unjust to the sturdy pioneers of that country; for they intended nothing but kindness, and their rude hospitality knew no bounds within the range of possibility. They always cheered the "*parson's*" approach with a hearty welcome, and would feast him on *corn-dodger* and milk, jerked-beef, and the never-failing yams. Many of the families were supplied with hand-mills upon which to grind their corn into meal. They resembled mammoth cast-iron coffee-mills, and were nailed to a tree in the yard or to a log of the cabin in the chimney corner. There was a small water-mill in Crawford county, on the Vache Graisse, known as the "corn-cracker," but there was a violent prejudice against such *monopolies;* and many of the people could scarcely afford to pay *toll* for grinding. There were, no doubt, good mills in some sections of the state, but I never saw one, except hand-mills, on the west side of the Mississippi river.

But there was a dearth of money; the parson must do without money, as it was with extreme difficulty they could raise enough to purchase *salt* and *leather* for themselves. He must dress in plain style, for they did n't want a "stuck-up preacher;" if he were a proud man, he need never come to preach to them. A calico hunting shirt in summer, a chip or straw hat, striped domestic pants, and coarse shoes were surely good enough for any good, humble, Christian man, and they hoped the *parson* was just such a character.

The town of Fort Smith had many intelligent and interesting people in it, but it was not embraced in the circuit, nor was there any village or even a post-office within its limits. There was no social intercourse of a moral and intellectual character that could possibly give interest to a young man of taste and cultivation. I am rejoiced to be able to record, however, that the labors and privations of that sterile field did not drive Mr. Graham from the itinerant work. After spending two or three years in that country he went to Indiana, where he is still actively employed in the work of the ministry, with a good prospect of continued and increasing usefulness for many years to come.

On the eighth day of February I rode to Cedar Prairie, to attend religious service and administer the ordinance of baptism. In crossing the Poteau my horse got into the quicksand, where, after considerable floundering, with imminent peril to both horse and rider, we finally succeeded in reaching the bank, but in a drenched and half-drowned condition. The day was chilly and cloudy, and no house or fire in reach at which to warm myself or dry my clothing. After a ride of six miles through the wind and cold the house was reached at which our services were to be held. But the symptoms of an ague were clear and unmistakable; a few minutes of *chill* were succeeded by a regular shake of an hour's duration. Mr.

Graham was to be present and preach, but had not yet arrived. When the congregation had assembled and we were about to commence the services, we heard a cry of distress, which seemed to proceed from the opposite side of Cedar Mountain. The cry was prolonged and earnest, giving token of impending danger or extreme suffering. A friend hastened to the rescue, anxious to extend relief, if possible, to enduring agonies as the piteous wail indicated. But on arriving at the summit of the mountain he gave a shout, which was answered from below. It was the preacher lost in the woods; and the prospect of spending a night on the mountain side alone, without a blanket or fire, had inspired him with astonishing energy in the exercise of his vocal organs. Such lusty shouts echoing along through the hills, could not fail to bring some one along to pilot him into "the settlements." The guide soon returned, chuckling over the *parson's* want of sagacity and qualification to engineer his way over Cedar Hill, when "the trail was just as plain as day." He could scarcely imagine "*whar* the *pas'n* had been brought up—his airly training had been mighty badly neglected, sartain!"

The *found* preacher, after regaining his equilibrium, conducted the services; and the invalid assistant, after administering baptism to the applicants, retired to one corner of the cabin, to endure a burning fever, with its concomitant tortures and agonies of pain and distress in the head and spine, till the dawn of the morning.

CHAPTER XLII.

LOUISVILLE CONVENTION—INDIAN COMMERCE.

THE month of March had come, and all the conferences in the slave states, except Baltimore, had voted in favor of a division of the Church, and had accordingly chosen delegates to meet in convention, in the city of Louisville, on the first Monday of May, 1845, to effect a separation and to "erect" the southern fraction into a distinct "ecclesiastical organization."

It will be remembered that the Indian Mission conference had elected J. C. Berryman and W. H. Goode delegates to said convention, and D. B. Cumming a reserve delegate.

As the time was drawing near for the convention to meet, Mr. Goode requested the Assistant Secretary of the recent conference to furnish Rev. Mr. Cumming with a certificate of his appointment as reserve delegate to the convention.

Mr. Goode then wrote to Mr. Cumming that, as he should decline taking a seat in the convention, it would be the privilege of Mr. C. to be present and take his seat as a member.

Mr. Goode's opinions were well understood, at the time of his election, but the brethren hoped his views might undergo some change within a few months.

His purpose was to go to Louisville at the time of the convention, as it was necessary to purchase the annual supplies for the Academy and the mission, and if conservative influences should prevail and the projected division should be abandoned he would return to Fort Coffee and continue in the work. But in the event of a separation his purpose was to continue in the old Church, and remain on the north side of the line.

These views and sentiments were understood, and they were fully approved by conservative men, even in the south.

He accordingly arranged all the business matters of the institution, effected settlements with all, taking vouchers, and posting the books with such exactness and care that none could misunderstand them.

On the third day of March Mr. Goode and family started for Louisville—Mr. Brigham, the assistant teacher, left at the same time. Meeting the Rev. J. C. Berryman, Mr. G. frankly stated to him what his intentions were, but at the urgent request of Mr. C. he went to Cincinnati and procured the supplies for the mission before the adjournment of the convention.

The result of the convention is well known; the Church was sundered in twain; a new organization was effected, and Mr. Goode never returned to the Indian Mission conference. He was transferred to the North Indiana conference, where he traveled a number of years; and again, at the bidding of the Church, he took his family and went to the extreme western frontier, as the first Superintendent of the work in Kansas and Nebraska.

After Mr. Goode left Fort Coffee Mr. Stateler became the nominal superintendent; but his absence in attending the quarterly meetings of the district made it necessary for me to do the work of both teacher and superintendent; and as the assistant teacher had gone, my duties were very onerous indeed. To procure an assistant of the right character in that country was exceedingly difficult. In the midst of our labors Walter A. Duncan, a half-breed Cherokee, came to Fort Coffee, anxious to remain a year, that he might improve his education and qualify himself for the ministry. He was about twenty-two years of age, tolerably well educated in the common English branches, and of studious habits. We could not receive him as a pupil, but concluded to take him on trial as an assistant teacher, promising to give him private instructions. He was a young man of good appearance, of fair ability, pious, and anxious to be useful. He was indeed a very promising youth, bating a single idiosyncrasy; he had quite a penchant for writing verses. But believing that he had mistaken his gifts, and was not "born a poet," I labored faithfully to get that crotchet out of his cranium, yet with but poor success; for in my absence he would still torture Mrs. Stateler and Mrs. B. with his doggerel rhymes of interminable length and dullness. Whether Walter ever succeeded in becoming either a poet or preacher I know not.

INDIAN TRAFFIC.

This is a matter of too much importance to be overlooked in these sketches. Standing upon the bluff of the river one afternoon I saw a small craft floating down the sluggish current, near to the projecting rocks beneath my feet, manned as follows: A sturdy negro stood in the bow of the boat to do the duties of captain; another well-developed Ethiopian was seated in the stern to manage the rudder; four Indian women, with bare heads and feet, and dressed in red calico skirts, were laboring *manfully* at the oars. A well-dressed Indian man was seated upon a pile of peltries, smoking his pipe in silence; a decent-looking Indian woman was seated by his side similarly occupied. They were evidently the proprietors of the boat and the cargo, and had employed the crew to work the vessel for them.

As a matter of amusement I determined to challenge the vessel. The captain was startled at the unexpected sound of a voice coming from the rocks above his head. "What you do up *dar*, sar?"

"Captain," said I, "this is a port of entry, and I demand your ship's papers. Whence do you come, whither bound, and what is the character of your cargo?"

"Massa, dis heah bongo is no ship; we'se got no papas, sah! We is cum from Muscogee nation, an' we am gwine to Van Buren. Dis heah boat's loaded wid cow-skin, deah-skin, coon-skin, an' buffalo-skin an' tongue. We 'se gwine to buy flouah, shoogah, blanket, lead and powdah, but no whisky!"

In that load of peltries we had a fair specimen of the exports of the country; these were their only articles, and they commanded but poor prices. The wild game had become scarce; it was mostly slaughtered or driven farther back upon the plains. Hunting parties would occasionally make a tour up the rivers and over the prairies, in the direction of the Rocky Mountains, to chase and slaughter the buffalo. Such expeditions were attended with considerable peril, as the prairie tribes were all hostile, and were ever lying in wait to rob and cut off small bands of travelers or hunters. To escape robbery and death it became necessary to go with weapons and in numbers sufficient for self-defense, and then to move with military precision, not failing to have sentinels both day and night to watch the movements of the insidious enemy. Having reached the buffalo range, they choose a camping spot, convenient to water and grass; and then apply themselves to the exciting duties of the chase, till they have loaded their ponies with skins and tongues, and have satiated themselves with the sport. It was not an unusual occurrence for a hunting-party to bring home a few buffalo calves. When taken young they are easily domesticated, and will travel in company with the packed ponies without giving any additional trouble. We saw two fine young buffaloes at Tahlequah that had been captured on the plains when calves. They were two or three years old when we saw them, well grown, fat and sleek, and herding with American cows. They were gentle as ordinary cattle, and, so far as we could discover, did not retain a particle of their native wildness. But there is but little inducement for rearing buffalo cattle; for they are inferior for beef, too unwieldy for oxen, and worthless for dairy purposes, as the quantity of milk given by them is too small, and it is also wanting in flavor.

CHAPTER XLIII.

CONTRABAND TRAFFIC.

The proper authorities have made laudable efforts to keep intoxicating liquors out of the Indian territory, and with a good degree of success. The Indian superintendents and agents were invested with authority in the premises. No one could lawfully carry intoxicating liquors into any of the border tribes; and if a man should be found over the line with liquors in his possession, it was regarded as *prima facie* evidence of guilt, and any one was authorised to seize the contraband article, break open the casks, and pour the liquors out upon the ground. The technical language of the Indians in such case was "to *spill the whisky*."

This regulation operated rather oppressively upon the military officers who were stationed at forts west of the state lines. Steamboats were examined at Fort Smith, and no rum, brandy, or wines were permitted to go any further up the river. They ingeniously managed for a time to evade the law, by fastening casks of spirits under the keels of the boats till they had crossed the border, and then the liquors were brought on board again. After that artifice had been detected the officers at Fort Gibson were compelled to resort to another stratagem to procure the all-important supply of rum and champagne. They would purchase their liquors at Van Buren, and have them carried across the Cherokee country in wagons, under the special care of a subaltern, who was careful to avoid any of the agents. That arrangement did admirably for some time; it was regarded as a decided success. But owing to the cavalier conduct of some of the army officers toward the Cherokees in the vicinity of the Fort, the latter determined to annoy them by intercepting and cutting off their supplies of liquors. Having ascertained that a cargo of choice liquors were on the road between Van Buren and Fort Gibson, they marshaled a force sufficiently strong to take forcible possession of it. Having stationed themselves at a point where it must pass, they patiently waited its arrival. At length the team came, in the hands of a careful driver, preceded by a pompous sergeant. The Cherokee captain hailed the teamster with the inquiry, "What is the character of your freight?" "Pork, beef, flour, and beans," was the reply. "No doubt of it," said the Cherokee; "but it becomes our *duty* to examine for ourselves." Here the sergeant expostulated, and insisted that they should not be interrupted when passing peaceably through the country. "You know I am an *officer* of the army, and I command you to let this wagon pass!" The Cherokee retorted with much dignity, "I, too, am an *officer*, and can not suffer the laws of my country to be violated with impunity." They then proceeded to examine the load, which consisted solely of liquors—all of which were immediately rolled out. The sergeant protested, raved, and swore, but to no purpose. The Cherokee captain was inflexible, and, with mock sympathy, replied, "We are very sorry, indeed; this is unpleasant business; but then the law is clear, and we are forced to do our duty—the liquor must be spilled!" And taking a hatchet, they bursted every cask and broke every bottle, leaving the earth to drink in the intoxicating beverages, while the poor officers at the Fort had nothing but cold water to quench their raging thirst.

How matters were subsequently compromised I did not learn; but the Indians, doubtless, dictated the terms of the treaty.

CHAPTER XLIV.

A SHORT CHAPTER IN ITINERANT LIFE.

THE Rev. John Smythe, of the Arkansas conference, was appointed to the Dry Run mission. It was a new field of labor in the interior, or rather verging toward the south-western corner of the state.

He was an active, zealous, and earnest preacher, whose labors were crowned with abundant success. Before the close of the conference year he had organized a flourishing society at Brown's Bend, and had built a church, which was appropriately christened "*Cottonwood.*" Brother Brown was one of the converts, a leading and influential man in the community; and Mr. Smythe appointed him class-leader. The leader did his work promptly and faithfully; and the society continued to flourish—in short, there was uniform and increasing prosperity till the year closed and the preacher set out for conference. The old preacher was not returned to Dry Run circuit, but was succeeded by the Rev. Mr. Jones, who received a plan of his work from the hands of his predecessor, and went directly to Brown's Bend to commence the labors of the year. Cottonwood meeting-house was filled with attentive and apparently devout worshipers. When Mr. Jones had concluded his sermon he published his appointments, requested the members of the Church to remain for class, and pronounced the benediction. But to his astonishment not one remained; and on reaching the door of the church all were gone, and none had invited him to dinner or even spoken to him. As he knew not where to go, and not feeling disposed to thrust himself into the bosom of a strange family to partake of unwelcome hospitalities, he concluded to rest himself in the shade; and as he was not suffering for food, he would dispense with dinner, and at the proper time proceed to his afternoon appointment for preaching. He carried his plan into execution, and so passed on around his circuit.

In due time he came again to Brown's Bend, and was gratified to find Cottonwood church filled to its utmost capacity. By the way, it always makes a preacher feel comfortable to see the church filled, and the second time better than the first visit. The people looked pleasant and manifested an interest at the very opening of the services. The singing was animated and lusty, filling the church, with its volume, to the "ridge pole" of its *shake* roof. The responses were audible and earnest, and the attention undivided to the close of the sermon. Again, before pronouncing the benediction, the preacher requested the members of the Church to remain for class meeting, but not one accepted the invitation—all left. Mr. Jones hastened to the door and hailed the leader before he was out of sight. "Brother Brown, wait a moment; I wish to go with you and have some dinner!" "In course, passon," said Brown, "you 're welcome, that 's sartain. The ole 'oman 'lowed as how I mout ax you home with me, but I reckoned, as we haint nuthin much nice in the cabin, we 'd wait a spell fust till we larned what sort of a feller you mout be!"

Having reached the shanty, built of round poles, with its "cat and stick" chimney, the "ole 'oman" hastened to prepare the dinner, which consisted of jerked-beef and potatoes, while the preacher and leader entered into conversation.

"Brother Brown," said Mr. Jones, "you have a comfortable church and good congregation, and you seem to take pleasure in hearing the word preached. How many of you are religious?"

"I reckon, passon," said he, "we numbers more nor thirty, an all on us sarvin the Lord as well as we know."

"I am rejoiced to hear you say so," said Jones, "but why do you not remain in church for class meeting? Do you not love class and prayer meetings?"

"Yes, passon, we do love 'em awful well, an we often gets shoutin happy in 'em; but you see we was all convarted and tuck into the meetin by passon Smythe. We haint jined your meetin; we belong to passon Smythe."

"But, brother Brown, brother Smythe is sent to another circuit; he will not preach to you any more; I have been sent in his place."

"Yes," said the leader, "we 've hearn so; Squire

Johnson telled us that our ole passon aint cumin to preach to us no more, an we felt mighty bad 'bout it. And we liked your tuther sarmint 'strornary well, an we 'low all on us to jine your meetin, but not this time. When come agin we 're gwine to take that thar step."

It is scarcely necessary to record that Rev. Mr. Jones succeeded in explaining to the leader that the Church was a unit, and that Mr. Smythe and himself were ministers of the same Church; and that the members of the class did not belong to either Smythe or Jones, but to the Methodist Episcopal Church. Brother Brown was delighted with the information; he was in ecstasies—a burden was removed from his conscience. He could now be a member of parson Jones's Church without seceding from parson Smythe's meetin. He could be loyal to both ministers and not be charged with instability or wavering.

Before brother Jones returned to Brown's Bend the information had been communicated to all the members, and all were alike rejoiced to be relieved from the painful embarrassment. On the next preaching day and henceforth the members all remained for class meeting; and each gave the preacher a cordial greeting, and regarded him as their own parson.

CHAPTER XLV.

DEATH IN THE MISSION—INDIAN FUNERAL.

On the twenty-fifth day of March, James Wathin, a lad of about ten years of age, died of pneumonia. The disease had prevailed in our family for a number of weeks, and James had suffered severely with it, but had partially recovered from his attack, and we thought him out of danger. But owing perhaps to imprudence he suffered a relapse, from which we could not raise him; the physician did all that he could, but without success.

When we saw that the lad must die, we sent for his father, whose name was Beelah, and who resided near the Sugar-Loaf Mountain, thirty miles distant. But James had died, was in his coffin, and we were ready to bury him when Beelah arrived. We were waiting that the father might be present when the son was buried. But Beelah came prepared to take the corpse home, to perform the funeral rites according to the ancient custom of his fathers. We did all in our power to change his purpose, but without effect; he remained firm in his determination to take the remains to his home and perform the burial services according to the customs of the tribe in their earlier and more palmy days.

Finding that arguments and entreaties would avail nothing, we assembled the students in the chapel, read a portion of Scripture, sung and prayed, gave a talk, and closed by reading the funeral service.

Beelah, though unable to understand our language, seemed to be deeply impressed, and during the service wept bitterly. He was an uneducated and irreligious man, and as nearly a heathen as any perhaps to be found in the nation. And yet he was a man of good character in his neighborhood and a friend of the schools. James was an only son, and his father had been exceedingly eager to have him well educated.

The coffin was placed in a box, which was fastened to a small sled, to which Beelah harnessed his pony. Then leading his horse it would require two days perhaps to reach his home. Beelah's wife was with him, but accommodated with a separate pony, upon which she rode quite comfortably.

James had been in the Academy over a year, had made fair progress in his studies, and was obedient and orderly in his conduct. He was not a member of the Church, but at that tender age, without a knowledge of our language, and having had no religious training at home, he was scarcely removed from infancy. We confidently believed that he did the best he could, and, therefore, through mercy, would be saved.

We felt peculiarly sad as we bid Beelah farewell, and saw him bearing away the lifeless remains of his only son. We felt the more when we remembered that his only object was to celebrate pagan funeral ceremonies. Their funeral is styled by them "the last cry." A brief account of the ceremony will be proper in this connection:

When the husband dies the friends assemble, prepare the grave, and place the corpse in it, but do not fill it up. The gun, bow and arrows, hatchet and knife are deposited in the grave. Poles are planted at the head and the foot, upon which flags are placed; the grave is then inclosed by pickets driven in the ground. The funeral ceremonies now begin, the widow being the chief mourner. At night and morning she will go to the grave, and pour forth the most piteous cries and wailings. It is not important that any other member of the family should take any very active part in the "cry," though they do participate to some extent.

The widow wholly neglects her toilet, while she daily goes to the grave to weep during one entire *moon* from the date when the death occurred. On the evening of the last day of the moon the friends all assemble at the cabin of the disconsolate widow, bring provisions for a sumptuous feast, which consists of corn and jerked-beef boiled together in a kettle. While the supper is preparing the bereaved wife goes to the grave, and pours out, with unusual vehemence, her bitter wailings and lamentations. When the food is thoroughly cooked the kettle is taken from the fire and placed in the center of the cabin, and the friends gather around it, passing the buffalo horn-spoon from hand to hand and from mouth to mouth till all have been bountifully supplied. While supper is being served two of the oldest men of the company quietly withdraw, and go to the grave and fill it up, taking down the flags. All then join in a dance, which not unfrequently is continued till morning; the widow does not fail to unite in the dance, and to contribute her part to the festivities of the occasion. This is the "*last cry*," the days of mourning are ended, and the widow is now ready to form another matrimonial alliance. The ceremonies are precisely the same when a man has lost his wife, and they are only slightly varied when any other member of the family has died. But at the time of our residence with them those heathenish ceremonies were not generally observed, yet they were occasionally practiced by the most ignorant and degraded of the tribe.

The Choctaws were very fond of ceremonies, and quite tenacious of rites and customs of long standing. They were not willing to bury their dead without a funeral service of some character. On one occasion an irreligious Indian man sent his servant to our mission, a distance of fourteen miles, to have a minister come and attend the funeral of an infant child.

But when they buried any of their colored servants funeral services were not observed. One of our neighbors lost a valuable negro man in the prime and vigor of manhood. An inflammatory bilious attack carried him off very suddenly. His mistress determined to bury him decently, and accordingly sent to have our carpenter make a pine box in which to deposit the remains of Cato, but she did not desire us to hold any funeral service on the occasion. It probably did not occur to her that a service would be appropriate, or that we would consent to worship at the grave of a deceased African. Mr. C., the carpenter, expressed deep sympathy for Mrs. R. in the loss of so valuable a piece of property. "Cato," said he, "was a valuable and good boy, and well worth six hundred dollars. Mrs. R. is very unfortunate in losing such a slave!"

But he did not express any sympathy for Cato's bereaved wife and fatherless children. Not a word was said with regard to the solemnities of death and the dread realities of that state to which the departed spirit had been introduced; not a syllable in regard to Cato's moral fitness for death and the judgment. The pecuniary loss alone was remembered when the poor slave paid the debt of nature.

CHAPTER XLVI.

OUR WORK—CHARLES.

MAY first, 1845, had been ushered in; our third crop of grain and vegetables was growing finely. During the preceding winter the farm had been enlarged and materially improved, the most of the labor having been performed by the students. We had also inclosed a pasture at the upper end of the canebrake, between the farm and the river. Having purchased a few cows, we were prepared to live more comfortably than at any time before.

The buildings at New Hope were inclosed, and would be completed in time to receive female pupils at the commencement of the next session. The buildings of the female institute were substantial frames, one story high, with porches in front and rear. They were planned with special reference to the manual-labor system, as it was intended that the girls should be instructed in plain and fancy sewing, the duties of the kitchen, the dairy, the laundry, and the mysteries of housekeeping in general. Mr. Goode had put the buildings under contract before leaving, and, when at Cincinnati, had purchased the articles for furnishing that department of the school. The services of Dr. E. G. Meek and Mrs. E. Meek were already secured for the New Hope branch of the Academy.

After Mr. G. had left us we found matters did not move on quite so smoothly as formerly; Davis, one of the pupils, and Anderson, a farm hand, disagreed, so that we had to separate them, and sending Davis to the fields, we placed another lad to assist Anderson. The students complained that their chamber work was not done, and that even their clothes were not washed. On making inquiry of Charles he told us that Louisa was sick, and that Ellen, his daughter, was not able to do all of the work. He thought it important that we should procure another woman to assist in the labor. Knowing the peculiarities of Louisa, I believed that the sickness was feigned; that it was only a ruse to shun duty; and as we paid them ample wages we could not consent to be imposed upon. "Charles," said I, "if Louisa is *sick* she must have medicine. We have had serious cases of pneumonia among the boys, and it is very important to take the disease in time; your wife may possibly have the same; I will go with you immediately and examine the symptoms." When we entered the cabin she was taken by surprise, for I had never been inside of her door before. She was the picture of health, entirely free from fever, with not the slightest indication of sickness. She knew not what to do to get out of the trouble. I assured her that if she were sick it must be an attack of pneumonia; and although the symptoms were not clearly developed, yet it was safe to be prompt in the use of the remedies. Charles procured a bandage and a basin, and in a few minutes she was depleted to the amount of fourteen ounces of blood. I remarked to her on leaving, that, if she were not relieved by the next morning, we should apply a large blistering plaster, and administer liberal doses of tartarized antimony. But the prescription worked like a charm—her health was perfectly restored, and we had no occasion to use the lancet, or even mention the blistering process.

Charles, the cook, is entitled to a paragraph in these sketches; he was, indeed, an important member of the mission family, having been employed even before the first session of the school was opened. He had once been a slave, but was then a free man, having bought his own freedom. At Fort Smith, where he had lived for years, his reputation for integrity and morality was without a blemish. He was a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and thought, by the colored people, to possess rare gifts in exhortation and in prayer. Charles was usually faithful and trustworthy, yet a little watching did him good, as it served to lessen his temptation to do wrong; it also reminded him of his appropriate place and duty. Almost immediately after our Superintendent left us Charles was charged with delinquency; as it was an unpleasant task to administer reproof to one whose head was becoming gray with years, the complaints were passed over in silence for a number of days. It finally became necessary to correct the matter, and let him know, that, although Mr. G. was gone, the work must still be done with promptness and regularity. It devolved upon me to administer reproof; it was, indeed, a painful duty. Charles was past the meridian of life, and I felt myself to be altogether too young to assume the authority of a *master*. He was, indeed, much less frightened than myself. I managed to state to him what was wrong, reminded him of his duty, and the consequences of continued neglect. The reproof was given with an emphasis that commanded respect. Charles was silent, but evidently moved; when he replied it was with becoming deference: "I 'se tried all my life to be good boy; hab sarved monsous heap of marsters, an *allus* please 'em. I sarve as *fust* cook five year in de army, an allus keep de keys, an marster never say, you do wrong. But I 'se tried an I 'se worried with dem Injun boys. They 's desput sarcy, 'deed they is. I 'se tried monsous hard to be good boy, 'deed I hab! But 'scuse me dis here time, an I 'le do better, I 'le bar it all!" And he did do better, for he was an excellent negro, all things considered. True, Mrs. Goode thought he would occasionally steal a little, and then lie a little to escape detection; and I have no doubt but she was correct in her observation and her judgment in the case. But then he could scarcely conceive it to be very wrong to take from the whites, remembering of how much he himself had been robbed by them. Besides, to take flour, sugar, butter, and fruit to make rich pastry for his wife and children, in his judgment, could be no great crime.

Charles would have scorned the thought of stealing; the word would have aroused his indignation. He might safely have been trusted with uncounted gold. He was a man of prayer; in the evening, when the work of the kitchen was finished, we would hear his voice in the brushwood, on the hill-side, where he performed the duty of prayer; he doubtless enjoyed daily communion with God. Whatever might have been his delinquencies and foibles during the day, he sought pardon and mercy before he slept at night.

His notions of duty and morality were not clear and consistent, but as nearly so as we could reasonably suppose, when we reflect what the training and life of the slave must be. The institution of slavery is founded upon iniquity and injustice; it is, perforce, a system of robbery. From infancy to age the slave is the victim of fraud, deceit, and falsehood. His history is a life-long struggle between oppression and self-defense.

Receiving such treatment at the hands of men professing to be the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, how could he be prepared to discriminate clearly between right and wrong? When we know the school of morals in which he has been taught, the mantle of charity must cover a multitude of sins.

Soon after we left the mission we received intelligence of Charles's death. We doubt not he has gone to that blessed home "where the voice of the oppressor is not heard; the small and the great are there, and the servant is free from his master."

CHAPTER XLVII.

DEPARTURE FROM THE INDIAN COUNTRY.

On the tenth day of May I had a final settlement with Rev. L. B. Stateler, the acting Superintendent of our mission, with the intention of quitting the territory as soon as a steamboat should ascend the river as high as Fort Coffee. We could not conscientiously remain in the south after the division of the Church. Before the separation, while the Methodist Episcopal Church was a unit, with a Scriptural and conservative platform, bearing an emphatic testimony against the "great evil of slavery," and looking forward to its "extirpation," we could labor heartily and conscientiously in fellowship with our southern brethren. But when required to abandon the old landmarks, and stand upon a new platform, or return to the north, the path of duty was clear. We determined to remain in the Methodist Episcopal Church; for it was impossible for us to pronounce the *Shibboleth* which was the only password that could gain access to the public sentiment of the south.

We durst not remain in communion with a Church which claims that "slavery is right *per se;*" that it is an "Abrahamic institution." We felt that we must withdraw from a communion which *will* not, or *dares* not say a word in condemnation of an institution which utterly ignores the marriage relation, and, *per sequence*, tolerates and sanctions polygamy, bigamy, adultery, and promiscuous concubinage.

After closing up all the business matters, and delivering the books, papers, and other property with which we had been intrusted, into the hands of Mr. Stateler, we were ready with an hour's notice to take our leave of the Indian country. But as it might be a number of days before a boat should come, we still continued in charge, while Mr. Stateler and family went a distance of fifteen miles to attend a camp meeting. At the time of his leaving the Superintendent gave directions that, in the event of a boat's coming before his return, the office and family-rooms should be locked up, and the keys placed in the hands of Charles.

On Sunday morning, the twelfth day of May, we assembled in the chapel to conduct religious services for the last time with the students. They understood it to be our last occasion of worshiping together, and were peculiarly attentive. We felt sorrowful at the thought that we should meet no more in the Lord's house on earth.

At length the boat came; and assembling our family together, we found it very difficult to pronounce the word *farewell*. They came forward in silence, to give us the last shake of the hand, all of them manifesting deep feeling on the occasion. Charles came last, to whom we gave a parting word, and handing him the keys, we went aboard the boat. Passing around the bluff to descend the river we looked up and saw our entire family of students, standing upon the projecting rocks, and waving us a last farewell. As Mrs. B. saw it the tears gushed from her eyes, and her emotions were uncontrollable. We felt the separation most keenly; and sincerely did we regret the necessity which severed us from the work in which our hearts and hands had been so warmly enlisted.

In fifteen years of itinerant life we have formed many and strong attachments. We have suffered intensely again and again in sundering relations and leaving precious friends behind; we have been required to bid adieu to beloved parents, brothers, and sisters, with but little prospect of ever seeing them again in the flesh; but we never felt more sad than when we gazed for the last time upon our Indian pupils. Our connection with them had been of the most interesting character; we taught about forty of them to read and write. We had rejoiced to witness moral development; they had manifested a readiness to receive the truth. Many whom we found rude and uncouth we left able to converse in the English language readily; their minds were undergoing that refining and purifying process which education and religion alone can effect. While all were orderly and moral, a few gave evidence of genuine and sincere piety.

We had gained the confidence of the tribe; its most influential and talented men regarded the Fort Coffee Academy as the model school of their nation. As evidence of this judgment, it is only necessary to record, that the Trustees and chiefs were eager to place their *national* school under the supervision of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Colonel T. M'Kenny came with a statement to that effect. "We," said he, "can not make Spencer Academy what it ought to be. *You* can. We wish you to have it under your care." Mr. W., the Principal, wrote to the same effect, stating, at the same time, his intention to resign his place.

It seemed a strange providence that now separated us from that field of labor in the Master's service, yet we acted from a conviction of duty, and have never regretted the steps then taken.

Our immediate successors were Rev. Mr. M'Alister, Superintendent; Mr. Graham and Mr. M'Alister, jr., teachers at Fort Coffee; and Dr. E. G. Meek and Mrs. E. Meek, teachers at New Hope.

The institution continued successful and prosperous, as we were gratified to learn from teachers and students. But for a number of years past I have received no intelligence from our old field of anxious toil.

During the past fourteen years we have occasionally received an item of news from our Choctaw brothers. Mrs. B. has received a number of letters from those who were small boys and members of her class in the Sunday school when we were living with them.

A few of our pupils have engaged in teaching; some have gone into the professions; one has graduated at a medical college in Philadelphia; others have labored in connection with the missions.

Since the foregoing pages were written, a paper has been received which contained an account of the remodeling of the constitution of the Choctaw government. The office of *chief* had been abolished, and the executive duties and responsibilities were devolved upon a *governor*. There had been also a modification and improvement of their judiciary.

The paper gave an account of the election of the governor and his installation into office. It was stated that "he came upon the platform, leaning upon the arm of the Hon. Ashley Burns, a judge of the Supreme Court. The governor delivered his inaugural address, at the close of which Chief Justice Burns administered the oath of office, in a dignified and impressive manner." That newspaper paragraph called up most vividly scenes and events of past time. I remember Ashley Burns well; the Indian youth who had traveled over a hundred miles on foot through that wilderness country to Fort Coffee Academy. We remember how we taught him the mysteries of the spelling book, and his first efforts at the blackboard to form words. We remember that Ashley was studious; that he loved his books much better than the ax, the mattock, or the hoe. And though we confidently anticipated his success in life, yet we scarcely hoped that in such a short period he would be the Supreme Judge of his nation. But we most sincerely rejoice in his success in gaining such an honorable and important position in his tribe.

There were other lads of whom we shall confidently expect to hear in favorable terms—youths whose movements in life we shall note and whose success we hope to record. They were the little fellows who "toted" the wood and the water—the boys, who, in a single year after entering the Academy, were sufficiently familiar with our language to render good service as interpreters. We could name a half score, at least, who are destined to fill responsible stations in the Choctaw nation. If they shall fail in life, we shall renounce at once and forever the maxim, that "the child is father of the man."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

MRS. S. B. GOODE—CONCLUSION.

BEFORE closing these sketches it is our duty to mention particularly one member of our mission family who has recently departed this life, in the faith and hope of the Gospel.

In preparing this little volume there has been a studious effort to avoid any unnecessary mention of ourselves or family. We had no desire to obtrude personal affairs or an undue share of self upon the attention of the reader. A simple record of facts required more than was desirable in this regard. But as Mrs. Goode has finished her course with joy and has entered upon her blissful reward, it becomes a duty to pay that tribute of respect to which she is eminently entitled.

Sarah B. Goode was born on the 31st day of August, 1809, in Washington county, Virginia. While an infant her parents emigrated to Louisville, Kentucky, where she was reared and educated. In her sixteenth year she was converted and became a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In her twentieth year she became the wife of William H. Goode, who was then a lay member of the Church. The life of labor, toil, joy, and sorrow which lay before them was alike unknown and unanticipated by them; for

Mr. Goode, at that period, had not felt himself called to the office and work of a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ. A few years elapsed and he became convinced that God had called him to preach the Gospel. The plans and prospects of life are broken up, and the aims and pursuits are wholly changed. The beautiful and comfortable home on the Ohio river was sold, and all the domestic comforts peculiar to rural life were surrendered.

Mrs. Goode "conferred not with flesh and blood," but cheerfully submitted to her husband's convictions of duty and obligation. From an intimate acquaintance with her, and a knowledge of her tastes and preferences, I know the sacrifice to have been great, and yet I never heard her speak of it. Nearly a fourth of a century of her life was spent in the itinerancy, and a large portion of it upon the frontiers.

Her health was not rugged, her family large, and her labors necessarily severe; yet she never uttered a word of complaint, or even expressed a desire that her lot should be different, or that Mr. Goode should seek for more desirable fields of labor in the Master's vineyard. Mrs. Goode was strictly conscientious, devotedly pious, and endowed with rare good sense, and she suffered cheerfully and willingly what God required of herself and family.

At the time of Mr. Goode's appointment to the missionary work among the Indians there were many considerations which rendered the removal of the family to a wilderness home unpleasant. There were five children of the proper age to require schools of a good character. There were many dear friends from whom it would be painful to separate. Society, intellectual, moral, and cultivated, seemed indispensable to the formation and proper development of the character of the sons and the daughters to qualify them for respectability and usefulness in life.

All these considerations had weight and force; and yet when a friend made inquiry, "Mrs. G., are you willing to leave your friends and take your large family and go to live with the Indians? ought not your children to be in school and favored with such facilities and privileges as they can not have in that country?" she replied, without a moment's hesitation, "If Mr. Goode considers it his duty, I can go cheerfully to live with the Choctaw Indians, or any where else that Providence may direct."

Conscientiousness, decision, and fortitude were prominent traits of her character. When the path of duty was plain, obstacles were powerless to turn her aside or discourage her in her work.

At the mission our labors were necessarily onerous, as our family seldom numbered less than fifty souls. The duties of superintendent, teachers, and assistants were properly distributed; the compensation of each was fixed, and his specific work assigned him. Although Mrs. Goode declined assuming regular duties, believing the cares of her family would require all her time and strength, yet she was a most important laborer in the mission. The stores, the larder, the dining-room, and the kitchen were under her careful supervision. Thus the servants were required to be faithful and economical. Prodigality and wastes were anticipated and prevented, and thus hundreds of dollars were saved to the institution every year. Mrs. Goode felt deeply anxious for the success of our work, and labored earnestly and indefatigably for the advancement and promotion of every interest connected with the mission. But her labors were gratuitous; she accepted no compensation for her services; she looked to heaven alone for her reward.

After Mr. Goode's return to Indiana his family were permitted for a few years to enjoy the comforts of civilized life, surrounded by many dear and valued friends. But again, at the call of the Church, he took his family to an extreme frontier field of labor. He was the pioneer Superintendent in planting the Churches in Kansas and Nebraska territories. He pitched his tent in the immediate neighborhood of Council Bluffs, on the east side of the Missouri river. There they intended to abide, not again changing their place of residence till their pilgrimage should end, and the Master should call them from labor to reward. But in the providence of God Mrs. Goode was not permitted to live to enjoy the quiet and peace of a happy old age. On the ninth day of February last she had a violent attack of sickness while her husband was absent on his district. Her sufferings were intense, but borne with remarkable fortitude and patience. She believed her sickness would prove fatal;

yet she did not manifest any alarm or undue excitement. Her spirit was subdued and her will resigned to the will of her heavenly Father. In the midst of her paroxysms of suffering and bodily anguish she would repeat, with remarkable emphasis, portions of God's precious word which were especially applicable to her condition. The Divine blessing rested upon her and grace was triumphant every hour.

On the fourteenth day of the month the final struggle came, of which she was fully apprised, knowing that the time of her departure was at hand. Calling her children around her dying bed she gave to each a mother's advice and blessing, leaving a most tender and affectionate message for her absent husband. "Now," said she, "my work is done! O that I might sleep and wake up in the better land!"

Almost the last words that fell from her lips as they were quivering in the agonies of death were,

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee."

Her prayer was heard; God came and took her to himself.

She slept in Jesus, and her cold remains now rest in the little rural cemetery, in the vicinity of Council Bluffs. When the mournful tidings had been borne across the oceans to us, and reached us in our mountain home, on the Pacific coast, that Mrs. Sarah B. Goode was dead, Mrs. B. and myself wept as children weep when a *mother* has been taken away.

"But friends shall meet again, who have loved!" God be praised that there is a life beyond the grave! There is a blissful home where the ransomed shall be gathered, where loved ones shall be reunited and separations shall not be known.

Till the great day our mission family shall not meet. Where are they, even at the present hour? While Mrs. Goode sleeps on the bank of the Missouri, two members of my own household are resting in a single coffin, in a grave in sight of the San Francisco Bay. Mr. Page, our first native assistant and interpreter, still lives to preach Christ crucified to the people of his nation. Four of our first students have died in hope of a better life, two of them having entered the ministry, and labored as assistants in the itinerancy. One of the class which we first received and taught is now a judge of the court, and also a local minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Of others we are not informed.

Mr. Goode's field of labor and my own are now contiguous. He is in the gorges of the Rocky Mountains on their eastern slopes, preaching the word to the miners of Pike's Peak. My own field of labor is in the ravines and cañons of the same mountains on their western declivities, where I am endeavoring to dispense the message of mercy to a mining population. We may not meet on earth—God grant us a blissful reunion in heaven!

CONCLUSION.

LINES BY MRS. SIGOURNEY.

Light of the dreary vales,
  Of ice-bound Labrador!
Where the frost-king breathes on the slippery sails,
  And the mariner wakes no more;
Light high the lamp that never fails
  To that dark and sterile shore.

Light for the forest child!
  An outcast though he be,
From the land of the sun where his childhood smiled
  And the country of the free;
Pour the hope of heaven o'er this desert wild,
  For no hope on earth hath he.

Light for the darkened earth,
  Ye blessed its beams who shed,
Shrink not till the day-spring hath its birth,
  Till where e'er the footsteps of man doth tread,
Salvation's banner, spread broadly forth,
  Shall yield the beams of the cradle bed,
And clear the tomb from its lingering gloom,
  For the aged to rest his weary head.

THE END.